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September 29, 1979

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by Morton Kondracke

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We asked Americans:

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Because Union Carbide's business depends on energy, our future growth depends on national policies which bring about reliable, long-term energy supplies from many sources, including coal. Since public attitudes help shape public policy, we commissioned a survey which included this question:

"Thinking about (each of the following), is it your feeling that this is keeping the U.S. from using more coal, or do you feel this is not having much effect on the use of coal in this country?"

	Restrains coal use	Not much effect
Coal's effect on environment	48%	40%
Coal's effect on human health	39%	50%
Cost of mining & transporting	34%	53%
Government regulations	49%	36%

Source: May 1979 national probability sample, by telephone, of 1,000 adults. Conducted for Union Carbide by Roger Seasonwein Associates, Inc. ("Don't knows" not shown.)

Half say regulations and environmental problems restrain coal use.

Most experts agree that we have a 300- to 400-year supply of coal in the United States, and 3 out of 4 Americans feel that we should rely heavily on coal for our energy needs. But when asked why coal—which represents 80% of our known energy resources—provides only 20% of our current needs, almost half named government regulations and the environmental effects of mining and using coal as restraining influences.

Getting on with the job.

HEW has found that "intensified use of coal as an energy source . . . would not lead to serious health or ecological consequences if certain precautions are taken." In addition, the National Coal Policy Project, composed of environmentalists, coal companies, utilities and other industries, recently

reached agreement on a body of policies which would allow increased coal production and use in an environmentally acceptable manner.

In recognition of the country's urgent need to replace scarce oil with abundant coal, the President has asked federal regulatory agencies to review their policies and to propose ways of encouraging the greater use of domestic coal. At the same time, the country has an opportunity to take other steps towards this end:

- Make sure that regulations for the use of coal properly protect the environment—but don't needlessly inhibit coal production or use.
- Use coal for the things coal does best, such as generating electricity. This will save oil for those purposes for which there is no present substitute, such as transportation and chemical raw materials.
- Support legislation which provides for demonstration projects to convert coal into gas and liquid fuels and chemical raw materials.

Union Carbide's commitment to coal.

Union Carbide believes that America must use its abundant coal resources to help secure its energy future. And that we can do so in ways that protect land, air, water—and people. To those ends, we plan to use coal as a boiler fuel, whenever practical, in new facilities.

We first began research on converting coal to chemicals in the 1930's, but stopped work on these projects in the 1960's because coal could not compete with world oil then priced at \$2 a barrel. With current energy shortages and skyrocketing oil and gas prices, it is again in our interest to turn to the coal utilization technologies we've developed over the years.

This advertisement is part of a continuing series on public opinions and national concerns.

For more information, write for a complimentary copy of the national survey, "Public Attitudes on Energy." Address: Energy, Union Carbide Corporation, Box G-16, 270 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017



TRB

from Washington
September 29, 1979

Washington's Bastille

Come back Henry, we need you! Henry L. Mencken, the scourge of the middle class. The collector of crudities of the booboisie. How his China-blue eyes would glitter at some new example of folly and bad taste, how he would rub his hands in delight before eviscerating his victim in a "Prejudice." Fair?—Let us never accuse Mencken of being fair! He was merely devastating.

I thought of it last week as I came by the somber J. Edgar Hoover Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. What Mencken do we have now to drop acid on the outrageous and obscene? J. Edgar Hoover is the man who helped drive Jean Seberg to suicide and he is honored by one of the most prominent buildings in town, in a spot where inaugural parades pass. Nobody else has an official building named after him along the Avenue; there is no movement to change its name so far as I know. Hoover developed the counterintelligence program to throw radicals off balance. It included sending forged letters to Martin Luther King suggesting suicide. Actress Jean Seberg supported the black nationalists so the FBI circulated false stories to barracuda-type gossip columnists that the baby she was having was fathered by a Black Panther. The infant died after premature labor (induced, perhaps, by agitation over the story). Other sad details I omit. Her husband, Romain Gary, says she threatened suicide on each anniversary of the tragedy of their child and was finally found dead. The FBI is tamed now, thank heavens, but here the formidable building stands, Washington's bastille, honoring J. Edgar Hoover for all of us.

* * *

Mencken liked lighter stories. This past week there was an interesting dabbling

in semantics by a Senate committee. It seemed rather harsh to the Ethics Committee to "censure" Senator Herman Talmadge, Democrat of Georgia, for his peccadilloes, so it unanimously recommended that the Senate "denounce" him. Mencken wrote avidly about nuances in *The American Language*, his lively and monumental study. He would have appreciated this verbal distinction. Talmadge called the phrase "a personal victory." He was merely denounced. The committee said Talmadge's conduct was "reprehensible and tends to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute." Senators presumably will learn to overcome their embarrassment about their colleague and voters may reelect him. Among other things, the committee said that Talmadge improperly collected \$43,435.83 in reimbursements after submitting false, unsigned expense vouchers from 1973 to 1978. He failed to report more than \$10,000 in campaign contributions that were deposited in a secret Washington bank account. He was not censured.

* * *

Mencken might have excoriated, too, the anomalies of our protracted two-year presidential election. It involves individual duels and reminds me that he once wrote of a social altercation "conducted with bung starters." He would have enjoyed the political minuet of Carter and Kennedy. Is our contest too long? The Japanese just started a national election campaign September 17 that will culminate October 7. It will be an intense struggle that will bring out three-quarters of the potential voters, if it follows the pattern of 1976. Recent elections in Britain and Canada were short and snappy, too, and brought out, in each case, 76 percent of the eligibles. America's boring two-year election in 1976 brought out only 54 percent.

Mencken was not inspirational, I'm afraid. His attitude was to enjoy, not denounce, idiocies. Carter's faltering presidency obviously needs a mandate; if the founding fathers had only given us the escape hatch of a vote-of-no-confidence-election, Carter could have gone to the polls and gotten a mandate, or somebody else would. We would know who's in charge. Now we don't.

Coolidge used to nap every afternoon. Even in 1970 Professor S. E. Finer, University of Manchester, could write in his *Comparative Government*: "But in the United States, this situation, where government can grind to a halt and

produce no action for a very long time, is not only tolerable but often even agreeable." I wonder how long people will relish no-government with rising inflation and unemployment?

* * *

If Mencken were writing a new chapter of his *Prejudices* he might note with a grin how American ingenuity is filling the void left by the founding fathers. The opinion polls is part of our government. Carter went down, down, down on Gallup so obviously he should step aside and make way for somebody with charisma. A constitutional amendment was passed to rectify another weakness of our system that became apparent 50 years ago. The great crash of October 1929 was blamed on Hoover, poor man, who was overwhelmingly defeated. That was in November 1932, but he was forced to hang on, a lame duck, until the subsequent March 4, a horrible gap of four months. By the time FDR took over every bank was closed. The Constitution was amended to speed things up a bit. Now it sometimes seems as though Carter were caught in an institutional trap, too.

* * *

Here is a final item Mencken might point up with his caustic art. Political scientist Aaron S. Klieman in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1979) says that America has been "preparing for the hour of need—the National Emergencies Act." If government threatens to collapse, he reports, there is authority for the president to take extraordinary action. Here are samples: Congress in 1861 passed the Food and Forage Act giving the executive powers when Congress wasn't in session. Research by a Senate committee in 1971 disclosed that the act was still in effect; also in effect was a national emergency declared on March 9, 1933 by FDR (to combat the Great Depression). We were under three other national emergency laws—Truman's in 1950 at the Korean invasion; Nixon's on March 23, 1970, to handle a postal strike, and Nixon again on August 15, 1971, to meet balance of payment problems.

Congress passed an almost unnoticed overall National Emergencies Act on September 14, 1976. This in effect repealed the other emergencies. So it is reassuring to know, Mencken might grimly observe, that if anything happens to Congress in this strange city the president can still carry on. The J. Edgar Hoover Building will probably survive too.

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September 29, 1979



Keeping Cool About Keeping Warm

All over Washington there are rumbles about the price of home heating oil, which has risen about 60 percent since last winter. The House Environment and Energy subcommittee has been holding hearings on the subject. The Department of Energy's number-two man, John O'Leary, said last week that prices are so high that some people in the Northeast may have to choose between food and heat this winter. He implied that a freeze on prices might be needed. The House Democratic Caucus sent a letter to President Carter last week asking him to reimpose price controls on heating oil (dropped by President Ford in 1976). Carter took the occasion of a pre-campaign swing through New England to request that the oil companies "act in a . . . responsible manner to freeze prices" through the winter.

We are not likely to get price controls on heating oil because prices soon will stop rising. What we will get instead is one of those frequent Washington morality plays, whose plot goes something like this: greedy oil companies jack up prices to gouge bigger profits. Humane president reminds them of their moral obligations to the poor and insists that they behave. Patriotic oil executives proclaim their concern for their fellow citizens and promise to hold the line on prices—maybe even roll them back.

All this no doubt will be spiritually uplifting, but it is only a charade. High heating oil prices are the result of market forces, not greed; and if prices come down, that will be because of market forces, too, and not patriotism. All this year the government, the fuel

industry, and fuel consumers have been concerned—quite sensibly—about the possibility of a heating oil shortage this winter. Since last spring DOE has been twisting the arms of refiners to get them to stockpile heating oil reserves. As a result, refiners produced more heating oil but sold less this summer, thus creating a mild shortage. Unable to find normal supplies, the middlemen who get the oil from the refinery to the home and the factory have bid up the price on available stocks. While supplies have been slightly lower than normal, consumers have tried to buy more and earlier than they normally would—the heating oil equivalent of drivers topping off their tanks. This has driven up the retail price.

Now there is something very close to a glut of home heating oil. Marketers began hoarding last winter to beat the higher prices expected as a result of the shutoff of oil from Iran. DOE, however, doesn't keep track of these suppliers; it monitors only refiners. It is now finishing a survey of secondary stocks and the report is expected to show these supplies higher than a year ago. The report will show, in other words, that suppliers took exactly those steps needed to ensure adequate heating oil supplies this winter.

Because there is a glut of heating oil, prices are almost certain to stop their upward spiral. Barring an extraordinarily cold winter or unexpected disruptions in the Middle East, heating oil suppliers may find themselves with more fuel than they can sell, which means they certainly will not be able to raise prices any further and may be forced to cut them. The higher price heating oil

consumers have had to pay this summer and fall has been partly the result of OPEC's extortion and partly insurance against having no heating oil at all.

The new high price of heating oil, whatever its cause, will be a financial strain to millions of people, and will force them to make painful readjustments. The average home heating oil bill in the Northeast was \$600 to \$800 last winter. This winter it will be \$1200 to \$1400. But for many poor people, paying to stay warm this winter will be more than a strain; it will be a catastrophe. There is precious little room in their budgets for readjustment. As renters, they cannot easily take advantage of opportunities (and federal tax credits) for conservation, even if they had the money to do so. The federal government cannot magically roll back the cost of heating oil, but it can help the poorest to pay for it.

There are several bills before Congress now to do this, including one from the White House. They propose various eligibility standards based on poverty levels, weather, and average fuel costs; and various methods of delivery. The Carter administration wants to send people a check twice a year. Others propose sending federal money directly to utilities, which would credit it to people's heating bills. The best idea, we think, is fuel stamps, analogous to food stamps. The great advantage of this approach is that the mechanism of delivery is already in place, and would require no new bureaucracy. The disadvantage is that of those eligible for food stamps right now (roughly those making up to 125 percent of the poverty level income) half don't ever get them, including an overrepresentation of the elderly. Any fuel stamp program would have to include a special effort to reach these people, who especially need help in staying warm.

Energy price controls are a doomed attempt to shield American society as a whole from the inevitable readjustments that the energy crisis will require. Fuel stamps are an essential effort to shield the poorest among us from a gale of misfortune they are powerless to readjust themselves against.



drawing by Mike Peters

The Human Comedy

From the September 11 *Washington Post*:

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Mrs. Gladstone Williams
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From the September 9 *New York Times Book Review*:

Author's Query

For a study of Josef Stalin, I would appreciate all references, recollections or photographs of doodlings done by him during important conferences and interviews.

CHARLES S. CLARK
808 Green St.
Alexandria, Va. 22314

Readers are invited to devise, for publication, possible versions of Mrs. Williams's own original method of serving dinner without leaving the table, and of Mr. Stalin's doodles at important conferences.

White House Watch Hanging in There

At a breakfast with Washington reporters on September 14, Secretary of the Treasury G. William Miller was asked whether he foresaw anything happening within the next 60 or 90 days that would begin

Correspondence

Cover-up denial

To the editors:

Wolf Blitzer's September 15 article in *TNR*, "Andy Young's Undoing," states that I knew the exact nature of the July 26 meeting between Ambassador Young and the PLO representative, Terzi, and that "the State Department decided to cover up."

I do not know Mr. Blitzer's purpose in advancing such a falsehood, but it would seem to be a fundamental principal of responsible journalism for *New Republic* editors to request that the author of such a total misrepresentation obtain the response of the official mentioned before rushing into print. Mr. Blitzer's statement is complete nonsense. Mr. Blitzer never talked to me before writing it, nor does my office have any record of its attempting to do so.

Charles William Maynes
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington, DC

ETS responds

To the editors:

It will come as a surprise to readers of Barbara Demick's article ("Evening the Score," *TNR*, August 25) that ETS fully supports the objectives of the New York state testing law to inform students and the public about admissions tests. We have prepared and distributed millions of free sample copies of the actual tests, as well as voluminous information about them. In addition, standardized tests have always been open to professional review and research and the shelves of countless university libraries are filled with articles on them. Individual questions and the tests themselves are written by school and college teachers and other specialists as well as ETS staff. The tests are reviewed for minority and sex bias. Therefore, their nature and content is anything but "secret."

It is important to state these facts only because Ms. Demick's article conveys the false impression that ETS is fighting tooth and nail against giving students the information they need to understand the tests they take. The facts prove otherwise. However, we do believe that the New York legislation contains provisions that will raise expense, threaten quality, and curtail services to students. This is particularly true of the requirement that the tests be

published soon after they are given.

In the interest of fairness, ETS expends great effort to see that no student has prior knowledge of test questions. For that reason, Ms. Demick's proposal that the same test be used repeatedly is impractical. Students quickly pass the word to each other, and some coaching schools would not be averse to hiring people to take the tests the first time they were given and report their contents. The only way to comply with the law without having the questions known in advance is to prepare many more new tests at considerable expense which must be passed on to students, or to curtail the number of times the test are offered. In addition, maintaining the quality of the exams will be more difficult.

The SAT was given 20 times last year, not only in "regular" administrations to thousands of students, but also in special administrations to one or two handicapped persons, for example, or to several hundred religious students taking special Sunday administrations. The SAT is now offered to the visually handicapped on any day of the year in Braille, large-type, or on audio-cassette. ETS and the College Board, which sponsors the test, are proud of that service and trying to expand it at the same time that the effect of the New York state law is to make it necessary to give a new test each time. The law fairly begs the College Board to reduce these services. Ms. Demick is simply incorrect in stating that the New York law exempts tests administered to fewer than 5000 persons: it makes no mention of any numerical limitation.

Ms. Demick is, however, correct in noting that ETS tries hard to guard against misuse of scores on the tests it gives. This effort includes extensive safeguards against having the scores of individual students revealed without their authorization. The record will show that the FTC study of coaching referred to in the article received our complete cooperation, although we were very insistent on protecting individual student privacy. Our own research on coaching has been published fully, and contrary to the article, no ETS researcher was ever fired because his research was "too controversial."

We applaud the objective of a better-informed public. Our goal is to find ways of accomplishing that end while maintaining high quality and flexible service

at the lowest possible cost to the student.

William W. Turnbull, President
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey

Editors' Query:

Does or does not ETS currently repeat questions on successive tests? ETS's alleged objection to revealing its questions and correct answers, as required by the New York law, is that this will make the tests more expensive by preventing the re-use of questions. Ms. Demick pointed out that since the law permits questions to be kept secret for about two months after a test is administered, it will require the preparation of at most six complete new tests a year—not a whole new test for each of 20 or so annual testing dates, as ETS has suggested. Now Mr. Turnbull says that tests can't be re-used because students will learn the questions anyway through their friends and through coaching schools. If true, this obviously has nothing to do with the new law. Indeed, it seems to undermine completely ETS's argument that the "truth in testing" law will require many new tests to be written at enormous expense.

Civilized discussion

To the editors:

I have been reading *The New Republic* since 1915, and have rarely found an issue equal to that of September 15, 1979. Almost every page was illuminative with information and persuasive with civilized discussion. Congratulations and thank you.

Will Durant
Los Angeles, California

Ghastly incidents

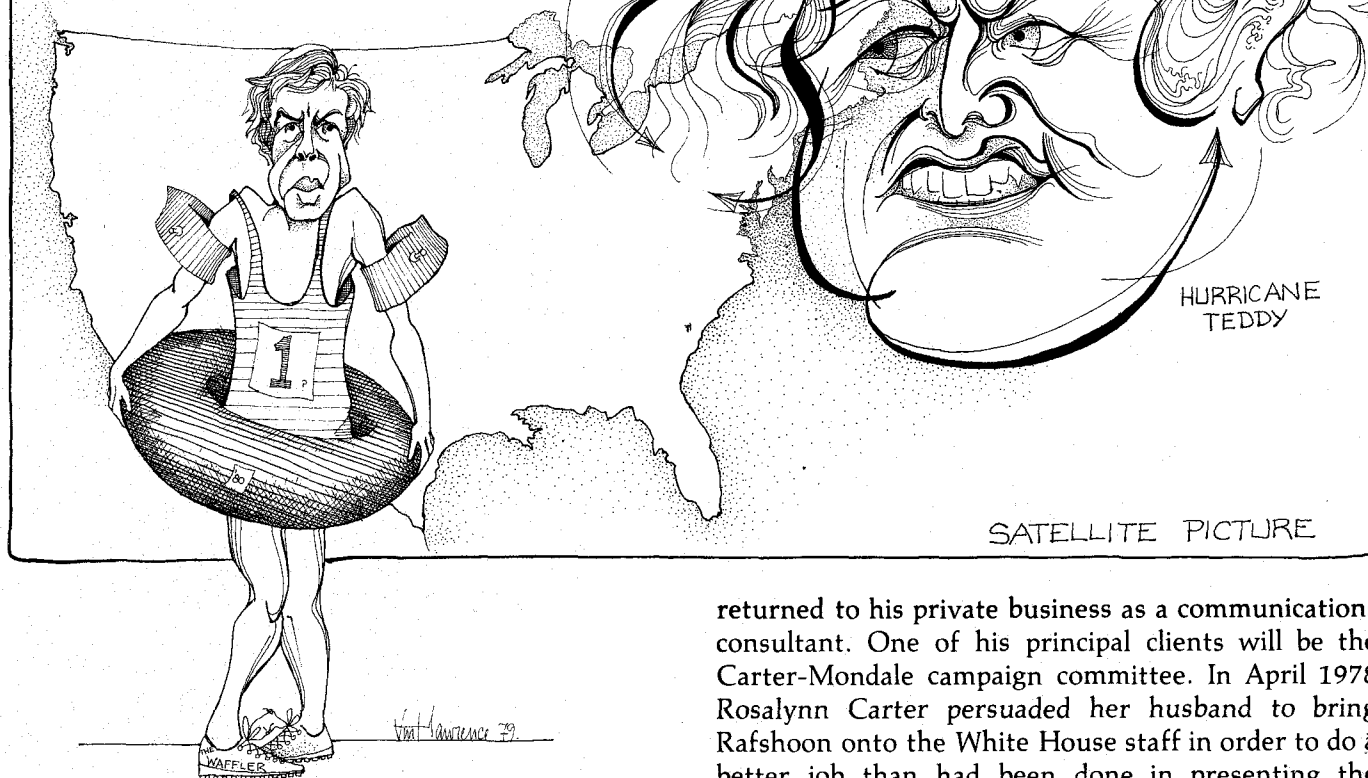
To the editors:

As a Philadelphian, I was very interested in *TRB's* column of August 25, "Nightstick Control." Readers should be alerted, however, that Frank Rizzo has been our mayor since 1971, not 1951. It is frightening to imagine what life would be like if Rizzo had had those extra 20 years.

TRB also writes that CBS Evening News showed the Philadelphia police "beating a black man in the gutter and kicking his head like a football." This description seems to apply to the controversial raid on the MOVE headquarters. If so, one should note that after a year or so of preparation and several days of literal siege, the police attacked a group that was itself heavily armed and publicly defiant. During the raid, a policeman was shot and killed by the MOVE members. One member,

(continued on page 40)

OFFICIAL FORECAST:
 BAROMETER *plummeting*
 TEMPERATURE *chilling*
 WIND DIRECTION *nor' east - gale force*
 TODAY *dark*
 TOMORROW *darker*
 EXTENDED FORECAST *black*



to reverse the President's steady fall in the polls and in "the public perception." Miller never answered the question. The best he could do was predict that "there will be no actions by the President designed for political purposes" and assert that "this President has been an excellent President" who "in my opinion will be nominated and will be reelected." He attributed Jimmy Carter's low standing to the Vietnam and Watergate experiences and to the resultant "sense of cynicism about government and all institutions." Miller in effect based his hopes for Carter upon belated recognition by the public that the President has in fact accomplished a great deal "against all odds" both at home and abroad. Domestic adviser Stuart Eizenstat, in my opinion the best of Carter's assistants, took a similar line on CBS's "Face the Nation" while also acknowledging, as Carter spokesmen have been doing since October 1977, that "we have not done the job we should do in telling the public of the proud record of accomplishment of this administration."

The day of the Miller breakfast and two days before Eizenstat appeared on TV, Gerald Rafshoon quit his job as the President's assistant for communications and

returned to his private business as a communications consultant. One of his principal clients will be the Carter-Mondale campaign committee. In April 1978 Rosalynn Carter persuaded her husband to bring Rafshoon onto the White House staff in order to do a better job than had been done in presenting the President and his accomplishments to the electorate. When Rafshoon left Carter stood much lower in the polls and in every other measure of public esteem than he did when Rafshoon joined up. What this suggests is not that Rafshoon did "a terrible job," as he jokingly says he must have, but that nobody could do for Jimmy Carter what he and his wife expected Rafshoon to do. They expected him to make the public President the convincing and appealing figure that candidate Carter was in 1975-76 and that President Carter often (but not always) shows himself to be in private.

Reasons to write off Carter for 1980 abound. First among the reasons is Senator Edward Kennedy's slick and long calculated emergence as a contestant for the 1980 nomination. Carter and his people believed until recently that Kennedy would wait until 1984 or that if necessary they could scare him off from going for the 1980 nomination. They sent him word that if he went for the nomination he could expect renewed media investigation of his responsibility for the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne in his car at Chappaquiddick, and intensified media discussion of his marital difficulties and the reasons for same. That didn't scare him off

Now the Carter people count on Kennedy's exposure to the explicit examination of policies and consequences that incumbent Presidents and declared candidates for the presidency must endure. Kennedy's response in a sudden spate of interviews has been to edge away from his past posture of scorn for Carter's basic domestic policies and toward qualified acceptance of them, with reservations yet to be defined. Teddy the fiery liberal is rapidly transforming himself into Teddy the moderate liberal (whatever that is) and he probably will get away with it. I am reminded of something the late Henry Luce told me that Joseph Kennedy, the father of John and Bobby and Teddy, said to him in 1960 when John was running against Nixon. John F. Kennedy depicted himself and was depicted by his devoted media clique as a liberal. "Why, hell," old Joe said to Luce, "Jack isn't a liberal. He's as conservative as I am." And that, for ancients who knew or knew about old Joe, was plenty conservative.

However misguided or misguiding they may be, Carter's senior assistants and spokesmen profess total confidence that Kennedy won't scare him into withdrawal and that he'll be nominated and reelected in 1980. My standard question to them in the past fortnight or so has been, "Is there any doubt in your mind that Carter will go for the nomination and that he'll be reelected?" Here are a few typical answers.

Stuart Eizenstat: "Utterly none." Robert Strauss: "Hell, no." Anne Wexler: "Absolutely none." Sarah Weddington: "None whatever." Jack Watson: "None whatever." Jody Powell and Hamilton Jordan (questioned together and answering more or less in unison): "No doubt whatever. He's in it and staying in and we're going to win." And Powell to White House reporters on September 18: "... I can't imagine that there is any doubt in anyone's mind. Our decision is made."

A veteran of Democratic politics and of past White House service who is often in consultation with the Carter White House said he's had no indication that Carter thinks of withdrawing. This friend reasons that Carter couldn't if he wanted to. It wouldn't be in his nature and the party wouldn't let him. "Can you imagine," my friend says, "this southern president withdrawing and trying to get Mondale, his vice president from Minnesota, nominated and elected? How would *that* be for a replay?" In mind, of course, was Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal and the defeat of Vice President Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota by Richard Nixon in 1968. Below the senior staff, at the middle and junior working level, there is more concern than the insiders acknowledge. Even there, though, the assistants I know refuse to write Jimmy off. So do I, for what it's worth.

At this writing on September 19 the most interesting development is a sudden awareness, leading in some instances to shock, that the allegations of cocaine use by Hamilton Jordan, the President's chief campaign strategist and chief of the White House staff, are extremely serious for him and for Carter. There is

overdue understanding that it's no longer enough to quote Jordan's assertions that he's never used cocaine or any other illicit drug and to argue further that persons in peril from the law, including indicted defendants, ought not to be able to vilify public officials and drive them from office with unproven charges of the kind leveled against Jordan in the way they are leveled. With the last I agree—it's a damned outrage. But that view has nothing to do with the prospect—in the opinion of a very senior Carter adviser, the certainty—that under the Ethics in Government Act proposed by Carter and signed by him with great fanfare last year, the attorney general will have to request the appointment of a special prosecutor to proceed against Jordan.

On September 13, when Jordan and Jody Powell talked to me about Carter's political prospects and intentions, Jordan was chipper and assured. When I told him I just wanted him to look me in the eye and say to me what he'd been quoted by others as saying about the cocaine charges, he looked me in the eye and said, "It didn't happen. I never did it." On September 19 a member of the senior staff who is devoted to him and had seen him that day said, "He looks awful."

US military intelligence used to have and may still have four classifications of information conveyed to higher headquarters. One of them was, "believable but not confirmed." That is my rating of the cocaine allegations against Hamilton Jordan.

Note: I last used the headline on this piece over my first 1974 report on the Nixon White House. It reported the utter certainty of Richard Nixon's senior assistants that he'd weather the Watergate crisis and finish his second term in triumph.

John Osborne

On the Hill

Energy Muddlization

When President Carter laid out his latest energy program in his Kansas City speech on July 16, his Energy Mobilization Board looked like the least controversial proposal of all. The object of the board seemed beyond reproach. "To make absolutely certain that nothing stands in the way of these goals," said Carter, the board "will have the responsibility and authority to cut through the red tape, the delays, and the endless roadblocks to completing key energy projects. We will protect our environment. But when this nation critically needs a refinery or a pipeline, we will build it." Who could be against cutting red tape?

As it turns out, a lot of people, for a lot of good

reasons. It took only a few weeks for the Energy Mobilization Board to become a bone of bitter contention between the Congress and the Carter administration, and even within the administration itself. One source of friction was the skepticism about how the board could be given the power to cut red tape without giving it the power to override environmental protections. Another was the administration's own lobbying in the House, which not only alienated some members mostly sympathetic to the idea but also angered some administration officials who questioned White House tactics. Of course legislators who didn't like the president's crash program to develop synthetic fuels had no reason to support a board that would facilitate it.

As conceived by the White House, the three-member board would have the right to waive any procedural laws—federal, state, or local—that would slow down the building of any non-nuclear projects it thinks are critical. Here Carter had in mind setting firm deadlines for decisions by agencies and requiring a streamlined decision-making process—through consolidation of several different agency hearings into one, for example. The EMB also would be able to waive substantive laws passed after a project has begun, to prevent delays in meeting unforeseen new requirements. If any agency at any level failed to reach a decision by the established deadline, the board would be able to step in and make the decision itself. Any appeal of a board decision would go directly to the federal appeals court, to ensure that, as Energy Secretary Schlesinger put it, "there will not be the extended court reviews that have been the basis for continued litigation in the past."

Two different House committees quickly went to work on their own versions of the board and came up with two sharply different bills—neither of them quite what the White House had in mind. The Interior Committee version allowed the board to override only the procedural delays in federal laws. It could set deadlines for state and local agencies, but would have no power to enforce them—only the option of recommending action by the governor. But the committee strengthened the board in one respect, by forbidding court review of any board decision except on constitutional grounds.

The Commerce Committee's version of the board would be able to waive not only procedural but also any substantive laws that delay a project (except for labor,

civil rights, antitrust, and criminal laws, some air standards, and state water rights). Apparently it also would be able to make decisions on its own whenever federal, state, or local officials didn't meet the board's deadlines.

While the Commerce Committee was deliberating on its bill, the White House managed to make some unneeded trouble for itself. Chairman John Dingell proposed his bill, which gave the board power to override substantive environmental standards. Carter had insisted he didn't want the board to have this much power. Representative Timothy Wirth of Colorado drafted an amendment retracting this power, but also requiring congressional approval for each board action, which Carter didn't want either. Carter's lobbyists, including chief domestic adviser Stuart Eizenstat, opposed the Wirth proposal and pressed the committee to pass Dingell's bill. Eizenstat explained later that he preferred the stronger bill to the weaker one, because it would be easy to get the part that made it too strong deleted on the floor, possibly in exchange for some concession. Why didn't the White House simply get one of the committee members to push its original version? Lynn Coleman, chief counsel of the Energy Department, said none of the members were willing to. But Democrat Andrew Maguire of New Jersey said he had made just that offer to Coleman and was told that the administration wouldn't support its own proposal.

All the White House maneuvers turned out to be too clever by half. Eizenstat's candid admission angered both Wirth and Dingell. Wirth sniped at the administration's "confusion." Dingell used stronger language. "I find it difficult to ascertain the administration's position on anything," he told reporters. "The administration has the capacity to surprise its friends and please its enemies." The decision to support Dingell's proposal to let the board waive substantive environmental standards also drew fire from three top administration officials—Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, EPA administrator Douglas Costle, and Council on Environmental Quality chairman Gus Speth. They sent Carter an angry memo complaining that the White House lobbying had made it look like the administration was "an advocate for federal authority to waive substantive environmental law and to pre-empt state and local law."

All the confusion about what Carter really wants only mirrors the confusion of his original proposal. The Energy Mobilization Board is a peculiarly illogical way of solving the problem of "red tape" and regulatory delays. As Carter conceived it, the board's authority rests on an arbitrary and possibly meaningless distinction. At the best the Energy Mobilization Board will be harmless; at worst it will be positively dangerous.

Take for example Carter's complaint that some laws create intolerable and unnecessary procedural delays in getting important energy facilities. If this is true, then giving a new board the power simply to waive the law isn't the right way to correct the problem. Why not just

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rewrite the law to streamline the procedure and get rid of any procedures that aren't needed? It makes no sense to pass laws and then ignore them whenever they prove inconvenient. The waiver provision, moreover, will help only those whose facilities are designated as "Priority Energy Projects." For everyone else the cumbersome procedures will remain in place.

At least in the short run, the board inevitably will increase rather than reduce litigation. Any new agency with new powers and responsibilities carries with it a lot of litigious potential, since it raises new legal questions that must be settled in court. The EMB will stimulate even more litigation than most new agencies because it raises any number of constitutional questions. A recent memorandum from the Justice Department to Eizenstat suggested several constitutional issues at stake, most of them involving due process and the usurpation of state and local authority. The author, Assistant Attorney General John Harmon, thought the board's powers were constitutional but conceded that "these are novel questions of constitutional law for which there is no direct precedent either in judicial decisions or historical experience"—which is another way of saying the board will be the subject of lawsuits for years to come. Even the provision that board decisions can't be challenged except on constitutional grounds will have to be challenged to determine its legality. All these legal disputes will take time, thus delaying some projects.

Carter's distinction between "procedural" and "substantive" is likely to be a special source of lawyerly contention. Unfortunately, existing laws don't divide requirements into these two neat categories. The distinction between "substance" and "procedure" is one of the favorite jesuitical debating points among legal scholars. Carter seems to think that procedural requirements are put in the law for their own sake. In fact they are designed to make sure that the substantive purposes of the law are met, and in many cases waiving the procedures means gutting the substance. For example, plants regarded as potential polluters have to monitor their air and water emissions. This regulation could be considered merely a procedure, although it is vital to the substantive purpose of protecting air and water quality.

The Commerce Committee's bill would avoid this problem by giving the EMB the power to waive both procedural and substantive laws—in other words, *any* laws (except those specifically excluded) that it thinks will impede an important project. All the environmental laws painstakingly hammered out over the last decade—the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act, the Toxic Substances Act, and so on—could be tossed aside at the whim of an unelected board. Some legislators relish this prospect because they never liked those environmental laws and see the EMB as a good way to get around them. Here Congress would be abdicating its respon-

sibility to make crucial decisions about how much to protect the public and the environment from pollution and other hazards. If these environmental laws have pointless procedures, or if they impose unreasonable requirements on industry, or if they need to be reconsidered in light of the urgent need for new energy supplies, then Congress should make the needed legislative changes. It should not ignore those defects and hope the worst of them will be nullified by a board largely independent of congressional control.

The board's defenders argue that it can be trusted with these powers because it is required by law to consider several different factors and grant waivers only in cases where a project couldn't reasonably be built otherwise. This sounds good, but in practice it may mean nothing. With the strict prohibitions of court review in the Interior Committee bill, there would be hardly any way to enforce this requirement. Since no one can sue the board if it ignores the guidelines imposed by Congress, the guidelines will have only whatever force the members of the board choose to give them—perhaps none at all. (And if the board's decisions *can* be reviewed, there goes the advantage of avoiding delay.)

One could hardly overestimate the environmental dangers presented by the EMB. If the number of designated projects is unlimited, as in the Commerce bill, every company in the country that wants to do so much as string a utility line could get a waiver from environmental requirements. Even if the board's powers are restricted to 24 projects, as in the Interior bill, there will be strong incentive for companies to prove they can't comply with environmental rules. Why should executives sit down and negotiate with environmental officials over how, and how much, to minimize pollution from new projects if they can save both time and money by getting a waiver so they don't have to abide by environmental laws? The dirtier the project, the more reason for the company to want a waiver; the bigger the project and its potential production, the more vulnerable the board will be to company threats that it won't go ahead without one. The Energy Department says the shale oil plants Carter wants can meet current environmental regulations, but the companies planning such projects would be able to save a lot of money by not doing so.

The Energy Mobilization Board, like much of Carter's energy program, suffers from his desperate desire to propose anything that sounds halfway reasonable if it will persuade the electorate that he is doing something to solve the energy crisis. It also reflects Carter's penchant for trying to take both sides of an issue. He badly wants to speed up the development of new energy projects, particularly the synthetic fuel plants he plans to spend \$88 billion to subsidize. These plants are dirty operations, and cleaning them up may raise the already unreasonable cost of synfuels even higher. (See "Synfuel Madness," *TNR*, July 21 & 28.) But Carter doesn't want to appear to be sacrificing

the nation's environment and public health on the altar of energy, so he stubbornly insists that the substance of environmental laws isn't threatened. But these two positions are simply impossible to reconcile. Whichever version of the board is finally passed, it *will* be a threat to the environment. Whether or not it will help solve our energy problems is another question.

Stephen Chapman

A non-political chat with the Dalai Lama.

The Giggling God-King

The monk who millions of Tibetans and Mongolians believe is an incarnation of Buddha has a grin far less enigmatic than Jimmy Carter's. His face has that look of innocent expectation that is familiar from our high school yearbooks. The god-king giggles a lot. "I am always laughing," he tells the press, "that's my nature." He praises America for its "big, open smiles." "I am grateful to be here," he says when asked for his reaction to US friendship with China, Tibet's enemy, or when his feelings are probed about the Carter administration's refusal to have any contact with him. "The memory of this visit will be perfect. I am inspired by America."

The Dalai Lama, 14th in the line of reincarnated monk-monarchs, met the press in the chamber of the House Agricultural Committee on a sweltering September afternoon in Washington. He apologized to reporters that he has little to say beyond calling for "altruistic politics" and "universal responsibility." He pumped hands tirelessly as if running for office; he enjoyed every minute of the noise and the confusion. His maroon robes of rough cotton blended in with all the seersucker and double-knit.

The Dalai Lama has been in exile in India since his flight in 1959 from the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The US government permitted him to come here for a six-week tour only after the Russians had invited him to attend a Buddhist conclave earlier this year and treated him royally. Until then, the State Department had refused to give him a visa—even to visit his two brothers living in the United States—lest the Chinese interpret his presence here as an American endorsement of Tibetan autonomy. His arrival in New York on Labor Day coincided with reports of secret negotiations between Tibetan exiles and Peking officials. "There is now a lull in Chinese efforts to crush Tibetan culture," a Washington Tibet-watcher says.

"His Holiness's visit is not political," argued one of his advisers, who was dressed in an American-cut suit. "He is here because of religion. He is touring religious

and educational institutions."

"But isn't he both the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet?" I asked.

"Yes, he is. We are lucky to have a god-king."

"Then is he here on a political mission?"

"The State Department insisted that the visit be religious. We said okay. They vetoed His Highness's visit to some places, such as Cape Kennedy. 'Too political,' the State Department said. His Holiness would have liked to see the place where those famous rockets are launched."

"Is he making a political impact?"

"Of course." The Tibetan official's smile was beatific. "Politics and religion cannot be separated. They are one and the same."

"My people are not at all happy," is the phrase the Dalai Lama used to describe Tibet under Chinese rule. He gently dismissed armed resistance as of "no use" and said he is "saddened" by the uprisings in which the Chinese killed tens of thousands of Tibetans.

He called the Chinese "our teachers" and proposed compassion toward the enemy. On his chances of returning home, he says: "The problem of Tibet is not the problem of the Dalai Lama. One day Tibetans will be satisfied. Truly happy. Then there is no more problem of Tibet." Asked by *New York* magazine's reporter about an ancient prophecy that he may be the last Dalai Lama, he said that it is quite possible. But seeing the reporter's face fall, he adds: "That's all right. Nothing wrong. When there is no longer any benefit, then naturally the Dalai Lama ceases to be."

"His Holiness is a great guy," a congressman from Alabama shouted across the hall to his colleague from California. "Yeah," the Californian replied, "he's got a terrific spiritual presence." About 160 congressmen came to shake hands with him.

The traffic director was Milton Friedman, formerly Gerald Ford's speech-writer, the man responsible for Ford's early witticism that he was not a Lincoln, but no Model-T either. Friedman said the unusually large turnout of congressmen could be attributed to excitement at the chance to meet an authentic guru. Friedman is now a staffer with Charles Rose, Democrat from North Carolina, rated as one of the bright young congressmen. Rose, a descendant of Presbyterian ministers and a founder of something called the "Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future," was host of the reception for the Dalai Lama.

One of Representative Rose's guests was a New York housewife who considers herself an incarnation of Jesus Christ. She looked into the Dalai Lama's eyes and found him "beautiful and pure." "He is so humble, so down-to-earth," said a young congressional staffer who was serving fruit juice and cookies at the strictly nonalcoholic bar. "I have been a closet Buddhist because of my job. But after His Holiness's visit, I think I'll come out of the closet."

"I felt a tremendous goodness in him," said a 72-year-old faith healer from Baltimore. "It was good just

holding his hands." A tall, strikingly attractive psychologist in her 40s confided, "I couldn't find anything to say to him. "So I just giggled. He giggled back. We giggled together. It was wonderfully relaxing."

Charles Fenyvesi

Charles Fenyvesi's book about the non-reigning monarchs of Europe, *Splendor in Exile*, will be published in November by New Republic Books.

Overcoming a tragic geography.

Polish Awakening

Mention the phrase "Eastern Europe" to a Pole and he will immediately go running for an atlas to prove that Warsaw is exactly halfway between the Atlantic and the Urals. He will say, "Central Europe; we are in Central Europe." When you point out that this leaves only one country, the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, he simply smiles in response.

Nothing frustrates Poles more than the casual assignment of their nation to the East, to the periphery of Western consciousness. The Poles interpret their own history as a long struggle to remain loyal to Western ideals in the face of a tragic geography. They see the election of a Polish pope as just payment for their loyalty, as recognition of their right to our attention.

When Pope John Paul II met with Edward Gierek, first secretary of the Polish Communist party, in Warsaw this June, the pope said, "We will be watching you." This was not so much a threat as a firm statement of new facts. This pope knows that the "divisions" he commands consist of millions of pairs of eyes. The Polish party, and the Soviets, are now put on notice that whatever they do in Poland will be witnessed.

This year is a good one to be watching Poland. The air is buoyant. The pope's visit left many Poles feeling, as one student described it, "like over-inflated tires, ready to bounce or burst in any direction." This year is also full of anniversaries, and in Poland, which has borne so many years of statelessness and occupation, each anniversary has been celebrated as a direct call to action. On August 1, the 35th anniversary of the Warsaw uprising, 3000 Poles participated in an illegal demonstration at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They shouted "Remember Katyn" (the site of the Soviet mass murder of the Polish officer corps during World War II) and demanded that a plaque honoring the Polish dead in the 1920 war against the Soviet Union be replaced. At a similar ceremony on September 1, the 40th anniversary of the German invasion that began World War II, five radical dissident groups announced

the formation of an open political confederation to fight for an "independent Poland"—a move that is more likely to produce new martyrs than it is to produce independence.

The essential fact of Polish political life is that the mass of citizens is more radical than any organized opposition group. The most impressive aspect of the openly anti-Russian demonstration on September 1 was that ordinary families who simply happened to be at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the time fell in with the radical dissidents, singing with them the patriotic songs of the 19th century, joining in their cries for "freedom and independence." But when plainclothes police began making some quiet arrests, the families on outings quickly disappeared. Voluble and politically sophisticated in private, the average Polish worker or farmer is too aware of the sources and methods of power in his society to go out looking for public occasions of political expression. Poles will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid contact with the party bureaucracy. It is only in economic matters that this contact is unavoidable, and in matters of money and goods Poles make themselves vociferously clear.

The Polish economy is in a state that even party officials call "perilous." After almost a year of negotiations, a consortium of Western bankers finally granted the Poles a \$550-million loan in March. Seventy percent of this sum immediately went to service the \$15 billion of previous debt that Poland has incurred to the West. Polish farmers are now bringing in the fifth disastrous harvest in a row. To Poles, meat is a symbol of prosperity. They now consume more per capita than the British do, but it is in chronically short supply. For members of favored elites and those with hard currency, meat is readily available (it is distributed to steelworkers, for instance, directly at their factories), but for most Poles buying meat means a two- to three-hour wait in line. The Gierek government, which came to power nine years ago during price riots and suffered through another round caused by proposed rises in 1976, knows that it cannot raise prices to increase supply. It has attempted to effect surreptitious price rises by shrinking portions and opening a new class of higher-priced "commercial meat stores." Meanwhile, it continues to watch and worry about the increasingly sullen people in meat lines.

The crunch is expected this winter. One dissident sociologist said, "Shortages which seem annoying in summer, when there is at least plenty of ice cream and flowers available, will seem catastrophic in January." In some cities, officials already have begun cutting off electricity for several hours each day in order to save coal for the winter. When shoppers ask for candles to light their darkened homes, they are told that through a mistake in the pricing system raw paraffin costs 35 zlotys a kilo while finished candles may sell for only 27 zlotys a kilo, and consequently no candles at all were made last year. These constant irritations keep Polish consumers at a high boil. "If people can't get carp [the

traditional Christmas meal] again this winter," a Catholic intellectual warned, "I wouldn't like to predict the outcome."

The economic crisis leaves the party with very few choices. Unable to borrow much more from Western sources, terrified of the consequences of raising prices, and incapable of inspiring the needed surge in productivity, the government can do little else but go begging to the Soviets. When it comes to direct grants (as opposed to a rewriting of unequal trade agreements) the Soviets have been forthcoming, underwriting a standard of living in Poland that must seem enviable to visiting Russians. But the Soviets extract various forms of repayment. As they gain even tighter control over the Polish economy, their demands for a harsher political and social line are even more difficult to resist. The evidence of what some intellectuals have called the growing "Sovietization" of Polish life is scattered: suddenly the name of a writer who one has read for years is no longer allowed to be mentioned in the press; an economic experiment is terminated before it has had a chance to prove itself; high school history texts are rewritten and a few national heroes disappear. Each of these steps adds a few degrees to the already mounting pressure caused by economic dissatisfaction, making life more difficult—and perilous—for party leaders.

Secretary Gierek has been stumping the country in anticipation of the party congress now scheduled for January, but according to Western diplomats he really needn't bother. None of the five identified party factions (two more liberal than Gierek, three that push a harder line) is mounting any significant challenge to the present leadership. If anyone really wanted Gierek's job, he probably would have secured it already; the past few years have been rich in opportunities to fill political vacuums, if in nothing else. People even have stopped asking, "Who is Gierek's Gierek?" (In 1970, Gierek was an obvious and attractive alternative to the aging Gomulka.) It is no longer clear to anyone that if rioters were to take to the streets once more, they still could be calmed down by a simple change of party chiefs.

Some party members have developed a sense of humor about their isolation from the general public. A Marxist professor in Krakow tells of falling into conversation with a cab driver only to discover that he was a committed Communist. "Imagine the coincidence," the professor exclaimed, "of you and me being in the same cab at the same time." "Really," he added later, "I felt like Stanley finding Livingstone."

In the Soviet Union, the act of becoming a dissident is like crossing the border into another country. But Polish dissidence exists along a sliding scale, and there are few forms that require a total withdrawal from the existing society. A surprising number of writers, for instance, publish in both the official press and in one of the 40 or so underground publications. Because of the growth of a vigorous underground press, official pub-

lications—which of course are available to far more readers—have become even duller and less informative. There is no reason for a writer to insert veiled references to forbidden subjects in his official reports when he can publish full-blown, uncensored accounts in the underground press. Marcin Krol, a respected writer in both the underground and official press, expressed the concern that dissident intellectuals may slip into a "luxurious semi-retreat." They can withdraw from the power structure until they feel completely uncompromised, while still retaining the official connections that make life comfortable. Seeking isolation from political pressures and problems, they can end up as estranged from the lives of their countrymen as is any party hack. Even members of KOR, one of the largest dissident organizations and one that was set up specifically to protect the rights of workers, admit that they have very few real contacts among the Polish working class. For Krol, what saves these dissidents from becoming irrelevant is the strong living bond they have established with the church.

The reach of the Polish Catholic church is extraordinary. It takes ideas from the intellectuals, vigor from the workers, fidelity from the peasants, and then attempts to give back to the nation a strong and coherent sense of purpose. The strength of the Polish church derives from its age-old identification with Polish nationalism, its faithful resistance during World War II, and the intellectual vigor of its clergy. Evidence of the church's enormous power is easy to find. Last summer 45,000 young people marched in a 10-day pilgrimage from Warsaw to the shrine city of Czestochowa in what one young participant called "a portable Woodstock, but one that was not frivolous and will not fade away." "Let's face it," a writer for the most prestigious political journal explained, "the church is the only real power in the country. Its only competitor lies to the East. The church, if it wanted to, could get rid of Gierek tomorrow. A contest between the church and the PZPR (Polish Communist party) is no contest."

The Polish church does not choose to use its power to "get rid of Gierek." Cardinal Wyszynski, the primate of Poland, and John Paul II, until last year the cardinal of Krakow, have spent decades trying to keep the lid on. The church is interested in longer-term victories. Andrzej Potocki, founder of the Catholic Intellectuals club in Krakow and an old ally of the present pope, explained, "We are not a political church per se. We do not want to gamble away the church's credibility by staking one side or the other. Look at the Christian Democrats in Italy—abominable. We are interested only in spiritual victories—two million people standing in absolute silence here in Krakow listening to the pope say, 'I beg you to accept the Holy Spirit. . . .'"

When he was cardinal, John Paul II was never interested in the once-fashionable concept of "dialogue" with the Communists. "Let them be good Marxists," his reasoning went, "and let us be good

Catholics, and let each of us count his flock." His political struggles with the party (and by all accounts he is a tough, sophisticated politician) were always to insure that the church in Poland could (in his words) "live its own life," could present its alternative message with unimpeded clarity.

The greatest triumph of the pope's career as cardinal of Krakow was his building of a church in Nowa Huta, a city established by the communist regime exactly 30 years ago as a completely proletarian town, a home for the "new man." "They tried to build a city without God," the pope proclaimed. But almost from the beginning the citizens of Nowa Huta demanded that they be allowed to build their own church, and after 25 years of agitation they finally were granted permission. In Nowa Huta today there are two town centers. There is a predictable public square with municipal buildings ranged around a colossal statue of Lenin—this is where the streetcars stop. But behind a lumberyard in an inconvenient corner of town there is a soaring modernistic church, and this is where the real life of the community takes place. On a summer Sunday there are

stands outside the church selling fruit, toys, and books. There are mothers gossiping and children playing tag. Inside there is a continuous series of masses from 6 a.m. to midnight; there are lectures, discussion groups, and a constant flow of people just checking in to see what's happening.

The metaphors appropriate for writing about Poland turn out not to be the traditional "tinderboxes" and "ticking time-bombs." One reaches instead for metaphors that speak of a slower, more lasting change. If there is, indeed, a "spiritual awakening" in Poland then its effect can best be described in geological terms—the terrain shifts; valleys open up and mountains become plains. One day the party may find no one at all on the town square. One day the Soviets may march into Poland and discover that all their maps are wrong.

Robert Hershman

Robert Hershman is a reporter on foreign affairs for public television's "MacNeil-Lehrer Report."

By Republican standards, they're doing everything wrong.
So why is it all turning out so right?

The German Challenge To American Conservatives

by Morton Kondracke

Bonn

Especially if it's Kennedy versus Reagan in 1980, we are likely to have one of the most ideological presidential elections of the century in the US next year. The conservatives already are saying that what America needs is big tax cuts, more incentives for business investment, balanced budgets, reduced government intervention in the economy, less social spending, more defense, reduction of union power, and fewer environmental controls.

Beyond these specific targets, the conservatives (the neoconservatives, particularly) are gearing up for combat over principles. Adopting the gospels of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, they are arguing (as *Commentary* put it in a recent symposium) that there is an "inescapable connection between capitalism and democracy" and that there is "something intrinsic in

socialism which exposes it ineluctably to the 'totalitarian temptation.'" Even though "socialism" is the last label US liberals would pin on their program—even "social democracy" is too politically risqué—there is no mistaking that the Republicans intend to suggest that conservative economic nostrums are essential to the preservation of our way of life, and that the humane social goals identified with Democrats threaten to produce stagnation, decline, and ultimately a loss of freedom itself.

But visiting West Germany makes one wonder about this equation. Why isn't it possible to have it both ways? Why can't the US have a generous welfare state, national health insurance, free university education, adequate welfare, a clean environment, strong unions, and also a healthy, productive, competitive economy,

low inflation, and a strong currency? After all, Germany has all of it.

Germany is the living disproof of conservative claims that high taxation, government involvement in the economy, and generous welfare state programs are necessarily the undoing of economic well-being and democracy. From a total wreckage after World War II, West Germany has developed (with US help, of course) into a country whose prosperity matches our own. Its per capita income in 1977 was \$8410, compared to \$8670 in the US. By this year, Germany may have even passed us. Its inflation rate, of course, is much lower than ours, five percent instead of 13.5 percent. The German growth rate in recent years has been lower than ours, on the average, but it also has been steadier. During the world recession of the mid-1970s, the US gross national product declined 2.1 percent in 1974 and 3.75 percent in 1975, but Germany had negative growth—minus two percent—only in 1975. Right now the German growth rate is four percent, while our economy is shrinking again.

What else do conservatives value as evidence of economic virtue? A strong currency? The German mark is one of the strongest in the world. Productivity rates? Germany's output per worker is growing at three percent a year. Ours is falling. Capital formation? Per capita, the German level is 34 percent better than ours. High-quality industrial products? Anyone who's looked at VWs, BMWs, and Audis knows they're better than Pintos, Chryslers, and Oldsmobiles. Exports to the US have remained brisk, even at the huge prices that the sagging dollar makes us pay for them.

And yet consider what Germany does for its people. A German worker who loses a job gets 68 percent of his or her last year's income in unemployment benefits for a year, and 58 percent after that for three years. These benefits are lost if a worker turns down an "appropriate" new job offer. If a worker can't find anything in his or her own field, the government will pay for retraining. Germany has national health insurance that's obligatory for all low-income workers and also covers retirees and the unemployed. Moderate-income workers can join voluntarily, up to a certain income. The upper middle class has to take out private insurance. Every employee can claim full pay from his or her employer for up to six weeks' sickness per year, after which health insurance pays benefits for up to 78 weeks at up to 85 percent of regular pay.

All workers are covered by pension insurance. And here, retirees can actually survive on the benefits, which are indexed to rise with average wages in the labor market and with inflation. Germany also provides child allowances to every family—\$30 a month for the first child, \$60 for the second, and \$120 for each additional child. There is more assistance available for the chronically dependent. Germans say that social stigma does attach to being on unemployment aid for more than a year, but, legally speaking, "social basket"

benefits are available as a matter of right. The disparagement US welfare bureaucrats show recipients doesn't apply here. There are far fewer welfare bureaucrats and their duties do not include midnight raids to catch a man in the house or the mass cheat-purgings that characterize the US system.

On top of all this, education is all free, including college tuition. And Germany also has a nationalized passenger railway system which doesn't make a profit but, unlike Amtrak, is still required to serve out-of-the-way towns and villages.

All this costs money, of course. Pension insurance costs 18 percent of a worker's pay, of which the worker and the employer each pay half. Health insurance costs about 11 percent, again paid half-and-half. All told, about 45 percent of the average worker's income goes to pay taxes, pensions, and insurance. In 1976, "welfare" payments represented 28.6 percent of Germany's gross national product, as against 19.2 percent in the US. And the crowning reproof to American conservatives is this: though Germany's economy is more stable, productive, and non-inflationary than ours, government expenditures represent 41.3 percent of GNP, as opposed to 32.6 percent in the United States. Clearly government spending and programs to make life more humane do not have to cripple a country and sap its vital juices.

Nor could anyone claim that Germany is not a democracy. In October 1980, it will hold a federal election just as free, and free-swinging, as ours. The conservative Christian Democratic Union, led by Bavaria's Franz Josef Strauss, probably will charge that pensions are too expensive, that health care costs are rising alarmingly (they are, in spite of cost-containment provisions built into the insurance system), that taxes are too high and business investment is too low. The inflation rate of five percent is scandalous by German standards. The social democratic government of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is expected to stay in power by pointing to Germany's prosperity and stability. But both the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats accept the basic principles of a market economy tempered by generous social programs. According to US conservative dogma, having 41.3 percent of GNP in the public sector ought to spell the beginning of ruin and the onset of despotism. In Germany, though, it spells health and democracy—social democracy.

How is it possible? The flip thing to say is that Germans are Germans: they work harder, follow the rules, click their heels, and produce. There is something in this. But the Germans seem to be getting less "German" all the time. Certainly this is true of young people. If you plucked one teenager from a street in Hamburg and another from Chicago and put them side by side, you could not tell the difference in appearance; and probably there wouldn't be much difference in their lifestyles either. The Germans on the average take more time off work than Americans do. Ninety-

seven percent of all workers over 35 years old get paid vacations of four weeks or more. Seventy-three percent get four and a half weeks or more. It isn't possible to say whether the Germans work harder than Americans when they're at work, though employers and government officials doubt it.

In other respects, too, Germans seem to be getting Americanized. They are less formal with each other and with visitors than they used to be. Young people and workers, especially, use the familiar "du" on short acquaintance these days, instead of stiffly calling each other "sie" forever. Once Germans never walked across the street against red lights. Now even old ladies do it. German cities still are much cleaner than ours, but parks are starting to get trashy enough that burghers complain. Germans also are distressed that the trains don't run precisely on time anymore.

There are serious explanations for Germany's ability to afford a social democracy and be productive too. And if the German example undermines the debating points of American conservatives, it also should give pause to American liberals. Probably the most important single factor in Germany's economic success is that its population and government regard inflation as a scourge worse than any except war. American liberals historically have pooh-poohed inflation as a conservative bogeyman (except when it becomes a political issue, of course). But Germany regards it as the social and economic cancer that it really is. If liberals want America to enjoy Germany's social benefits, they will also have to give conservatives their due and find a way to cut inflation. American labor unions, especially, will have to swallow hard.

Germany's social democracy is more advanced than ours, but its management of the economy is more conservative. Germany hasn't rejected Keynesian economics. The government intervenes in the economy to temper fluctuations in the business cycle. It cuts taxes in slow-growth times, loosens credit, spends on public works, and goes into budget deficit to stimulate the economy, just as ours does. But unlike ours, the German government reverses course when times are good. It doesn't respond to political or bureaucratic pressure to keep counter-cyclical programs in force beyond their time. It doesn't create bureaucracies as big as ours (900 people manage the German housing program, as against 16,000 at HUD), and the political pressures are all in the opposite direction from ours.

It would be politically unthinkable for a German chancellor to do what Richard Nixon did in 1972: superheat the economy to insure full employment in an election year, while imposing wage and price controls to hold down inflation. Right now in Germany, Chancellor Schmidt is running a budget surplus in order to reduce the public debts accumulated in deficit years that followed the mid-1970s recession and also in order to reduce inflation. With a US recession coming on, there is talk of cutting taxes in Germany next year

to ease the impact here. But Schmidt has asserted he won't do the politically popular thing until after next October's election. Of course, the really popular thing to do in Germany is to resist stimulative (and potentially inflationary) tax cuts. There is just a world of difference between economic politics as practiced in Germany and in the US.

History explains the difference between the German and American attitudes toward economics. Americans remember the Great Depression as their worst time of suffering, and the New Deal as the beginning of social salvation. Without a real "social basket," we still—liberals especially—regard recession and its resulting unemployment as the most terrible economic danger. In Germany social insurance began in the 1880s under Bismarck. The Germans' worst historical memories are of the ruinous inflations of the 1920s and the postwar 1940s. From 1955 to 1970, Germany let its inflation rate go above 3.5 percent only once, and the all-time high, after the great OPEC oil gouge of 1974, was seven percent.

As a result, Germany is not plagued by the inflation psychology that prevails now in the United States. Americans think it's senseless to save money because, with inflation in double digits, savings will be worth less tomorrow than they are today. So we spend, but the Germans don't. Though their per capita income is just as high as ours, Germany's consumption rate is 66 percent of that in the US. On the average, Germans have far fewer TV sets, cars, and telephones than we do. The money that doesn't go for taxes goes for savings. The German savings rate is 15 percent of income, double ours. This money is available for capital investment, which increases productivity, which increases the competitive strength of the economy, which makes for a stronger currency, which makes for cheaper imports, which contributes to lower inflation. Germany is in a virtuous cycle of price stability, whereas we are in a vicious one of inflation. It's no wonder that Schmidt balked when the Carter administration tried to get Germany to inflate its economy in 1977 to serve as the "locomotive" to pull along weaker economies in Europe. In Germany's interest, he was dead right to refuse to drive a train to nowhere.

Also unlike the US, which discourages savings through ceilings on bank deposit interest rates, the German government offers incentives to save. Bank interest is untaxed up to a sizable amount, and the government offers matching funds to people who commit themselves to buying a house. The government also gives matching money to small savers who have their money in the stock market. There is nothing like the American's level of consumer credit buying in Germany.

Corporate profits are taxed at 56 percent in Germany, nominally higher than in the US, but profits are not double-taxed. An investor pays tax on his dividend income, above a certain level, but the

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corporation isn't taxed on distributed profits. As in the US, Germany has an investment tax credit. Government gives grants and loans for corporate expansion and also helps out companies in trouble. High-income Germans are taxed at a maximum of 56 percent, a lower rate than in the US.

Besides an anti-inflation, pro-investment, productivity psychology, the other most important contributor to Germany's economic strength is labor union restraint. German labor and management view themselves as "social partners." The unions are as dedicated as management and government to holding down inflation on the theory that—as a labor ministry official said—"You don't slaughter the cow that gives you milk." As a matter of policy, the unions tailor wage demands to productivity, predicted growth rates, and inflation, rather than aiming to take what they can get.

Since 1973 the German Labor Federation has even dropped the objective of redistributing national wealth from capital to workers. Anticipating a 10 percent inflation rate in 1974, the unions asked for and got increases of 10 percent to 13 percent. When inflation actually rose only to seven or eight percent, the unions honestly felt they had gotten more than their fair share. "We haven't given back the extra we got in 1974," a union official said, "but we made the unspoken concession to moderate our demands. We understand the need of industry for profits to reinvest. The profit rate had fallen continuously since 1970. We accepted the fact that they needed a re-creation period, so we dropped our redistribution demands in 1973. What happened in 1974 was an accident. These are things we don't talk about. It's unspoken, but we knew that profits had to go up faster, and so we kept back a bit. Profits have been back up since 1975, more than increases for the workers, and we're back to the same distribution (of income) as in 1972; we say, 'now, it's enough.'"

An American or British labor leader who exhibited such concern about the welfare of corporate capital might be tried for treason. "I know we're considered tame in England and the US," this union official said, "but you have to understand the psychology here. We're not against industry. We're with it." It will please conservatives to know that Germany not only has picturebook unions, but that federal law forbids the closed shop and that there is no statutory minimum wage. Unionists say, though, that workers never are paid less than the prevailing union contract wage for similar work.

A lot has been written about the German union-participation device, *mitbestimmung* (co-determination), as a contributor to labor stability, but it's overrated. In big corporations, unions by law hold half the seats on the board of directors, and they probably get more information about company finances than American unions do. In practice, though, the union bloc always gets outvoted in board meetings. Unionists say that co-

determination leads more to conflict than to cooperation, and that it also puts a strain on union leaders to represent diligently their members and the company at the same time.

Real union power and industrial democracy in Germany reside in plant-level work councils, elected by employees, which must be consulted on work rules, hours, layoffs, and automation. They do not have veto power, but can take a company to labor court in a dispute. The councils' powers of obstruction are great enough that management has an incentive to negotiate rather than fight. Big layoffs are rare in German industry. In a recession, the preferred custom is to put employees on shorter weeks. They receive partial unemployment compensation.

To adapt to German practice, US unions would have to strike less and drop their demands for protection against foreign competition and "runaway plants." Strikes are illegal except during contract bargaining, and they also are unpopular. From 1960 to 1975, Germany lost only 6.8 million worker days in strikes, compared to 63 million in France and 155 million in Britain. A labor ministry official said that greater union cooperativeness in Germany, as compared with the US, was matched by the fact that "our industry is not constantly looking for a 'sunbelt' to move to in order to be free of unions." Of course it would be useless for firms to move within Germany to escape unions—they are everywhere—but there is nothing to keep capital from going abroad to find cheaper labor and better currency exchange rates. Volkswagen, for example, has opened plants in Pennsylvania and Brazil, and labor's man on Volkswagen's board even voted for it because it made economic sense for the company. The unions do not lobby for laws to keep imports out or capital in. "We can't be protectionist," said a union official. "Germany lives on exports and we have to welcome imports. America shouldn't be protectionist either, because we'd have to take revenge, and it would bring the collapse of the world economy, as in the 1920s and 1930s."

According to this union official, Germany is now exporting more capital than is coming in. "Jobs are down and industry is shrinking," he said. "You can be angry about it, but what can you do about the weather?" Germany now has 800,000 unemployed workers and is not growing fast enough to provide employment for all of the 100,000 new workers entering the labor market each year. Unemployment insurance, though, takes much of the pain out of joblessness, and unionists figure unemployment will decline radically in the 1980s, when the effects of below-zero population growth begin to shrink the labor force. In the late 1980s, in fact, Germany should be suffering from a labor shortage. That will require new importing of foreign workers.

There are no energy price controls here. When OPEC raises prices, they go up correspondingly at the gas pump. Gasoline now costs \$2.30 a gallon here. The Germans stubbornly refuse to establish speed limits on

the intercity autobahns. But they have absorbed energy price increases without ruinous inflation and without gas lines. Per capita energy consumption in Germany is just over half what it is in the US. "If we see a house with all its lights on," a German diplomat said, "we say to each other, 'that's where the Americans live.'"

The comfortable, non-inflationary German lifestyle depends on several advantages that the US doesn't have. For one, Germany spends just 3.5 percent of its GNP on defense, whereas the US spends six percent. The Germans have promised, along with the US and the rest of NATO, to raise defense expenditures by three percent annually for the next five years; but in holding down inflation this year, they will fall short of their pledge. This obviously isn't fair, and some honest Germans will admit the fact. Also, the German economy doesn't bear the weight of large, chronically depressed minority groups, although two million foreign workers and their families—Turks especially—are beginning to present a poverty problem.

Germany's prosperous society is rather dull. As a US expert said, "The Germans have about reached the

limits of the welfare state. They haven't overdone it, as in Britain and Sweden. They haven't pushed for too much welfare and redistribution of income. They've kept up productivity. They've got it nice, and they'll probably keep it. Slow growth, a high standard of living—a happy, satisfied, stagnant country."

It's fine for the Germans. They've given the world and themselves all too much excitement for more than a century. With our penchant for growth, our need to provide an escape from poverty for blacks and other poor people, and our role as the guarantor of the free world's freedom, we obviously can't adopt the contemporary German model completely. But Germany demonstrates that we don't have to adopt conservative writ and abandon the welfare state in order to be productive and powerful. The principle of German social democracy is adaptable. Germany is able to keep inflation low and productivity high precisely because its citizens are protected by a social net. At the same time, social benefits can be kept generous because that economy is productive and non-inflationary. The US, if it wants to, can have it both ways too.

It's never too early to begin leaping those meritocratic hurdles.

The Kindergarten Rat Race

by Barbara Demick

Those who believe that the greatness of our system lies in its ability to recognize and reward talent in all fields of endeavor will be gratified to learn that the American values of competition and meritocracy—while they may atrophy elsewhere—are thriving among some of the nation's four-year-olds. In Washington, it's dog-eat-dog to get into the right kindergarten.

More and more members of Washington's large professional class are turning to private education for their children. This is partly for status reasons and partly because of the declining reputation of even the suburban public schools. The increasing number of working professional couples, with double incomes and often with fewer children, means that more families than before can afford the financial burden of private school tuition. Therefore, despite tuition costs hovering around \$2000 for some kindergarten programs, private schools around the Potomac have been deluged with applications—as many as 12 for each available space this semester. As a result, the schools have become as selective as medical schools, and their admissions procedures are just as sophisticated.

Candidates for almost all private nursery and kindergarten programs are required to visit the school to be observed in a play or classroom situation among peers. Both parent and child are interviewed. At the most competitive schools—like the Norwood School in Bethesda, Maryland; Beauvoir, a primary school associated with National Cathedral; and Sidwell Friends School, a Quaker School in the District of Columbia—at least one recommendation is required and the child must take some form of standardized test administered by highly trained school psychologists. Parents of children who started private kindergarten this month spent much of their time last winter trying to fill the requirements, and then waited anxiously for the results in mid-April. During the height of the admissions season in March, the topic of how to get a child into kindergarten was a favorite at gatherings of young professionals with children.

Many parents are left stupefied by the entire process, wondering why their three- and four-year-olds didn't get into any of the schools they applied to. (The effect

(continued on page 24)

IT'S ABOUT WE LEARN LISTEN

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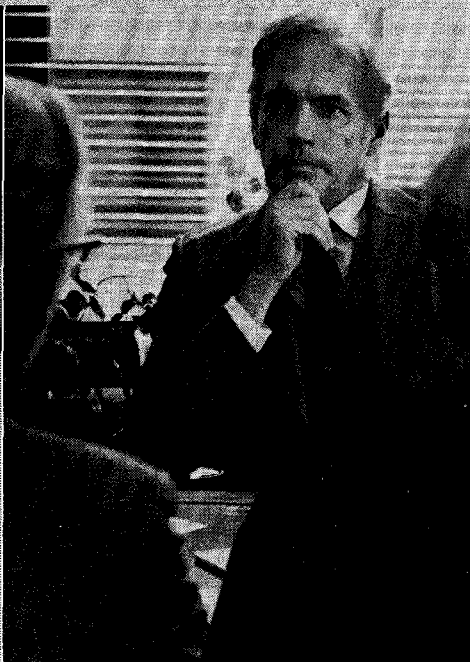
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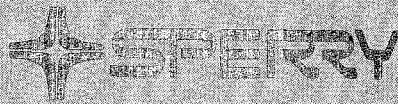
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on the children is harder to assess.) Here are a few cautionary tales from people who've recently been through the admissions ordeal.

One mother of two had her five-year-old son on the waiting list at Norwood, the Potomac School in McLean, Virginia, and at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School in the District of Columbia, before he was finally admitted into St. Patrick's. "We applied late and then found out that there were only four spaces at Potomac and three at St. Patrick's for boys. It's a nightmare, especially if this is the first child you're trying to get in, since they give siblings first priority. When he didn't get in at first, we were very depressed since we'd worked so hard on it. I just thought, 'My god, he's a five-year-old child. Why didn't he get in?'" This mother says that in preparing her child for the admissions interview, "I was very nervous. Children fluctuate a lot, and you'd do anything, promise them anything, threaten, whatever, to get them to behave. . . . Each school likes certain types of people. It's really a tough system." She says that her younger child, now 22 months old, probably will go to St. Patrick's nursery school, to make it easier for that child to get into kindergarten at St. Patrick's.

Another mother described one of the kindergarten interviews: "A very pressured situation. You go in there with eight other nervous mothers with nervous children, and occasionally a father who comes in during the afternoon in a three-piece suit. Men get very competitive about it, I think worse than the mothers." At one of the schools, she said, "The child psychologist really scared him [her son]. He's a very together kid, normally, but he was really getting tired of being tested."

One parent found the process much easier. She has a nine-year-old at Norwood and another child entering Beauvoir this month. She said, "I'm a Washington girl, I attended National Cathedral [a girls' high school], and have stepchildren at Beauvoir, and have some connections. I don't think that hurts."

In another family a five-year-old is at Sidwell Friends while the seven-year-old, who didn't get in, is at the public schools. The mother, who is a psychologist and

very familiar with the admissions process, said, "My younger is a very charming child, the kind of kid who will just come out and grab you with his personality." The older child, she said, "was very mad that he didn't get in, but finally just said, 'Well, I've got 10 more years to keep trying.' We tried to handle it all as a therapeutic process. We told the children that we would like you to go here but whether or not you get in has nothing to do with you personally. Still, I realized that I was talking about a little child like he was going to Stanford or Harvard."

"The parents come in here scared stiff and glassy-eyed," said Sidwell's admissions director, Mrs. Georgia Irvin, who has a national reputation as one of the leading experts in child admissions. "They are scared silly about the education of their children and want to start early. Many of the parents are in positions of power and prestige. They've always been winners and many encounter here the first rejection they've ever had."

Sidwell Friends (nursery school through 12th grade) gives some priority to Quakers. Like most Washington private schools, it also gives preferential treatment to minorities, siblings of present students, and children of alumni. But for everybody applying, the competition for places at Sidwell is about the toughest of all the schools in the Washington area. Because of this, Sidwell has the most rigorous admissions procedure. Each three-and-a-half-year-old applying at Sidwell's "transition" (nursery school) program must attend a class where he or she can be evaluated for interaction with other children and aural comprehension; parent and child are interviewed separately, each applicant must supply recommendations from a baby-sitter or nursery teacher and from a family friend, and the child must take an adapted version of a standardized test. Irvin says the test is supposed to measure how the child relates to unfamiliar situations, to other children, and to adults; his or her problem-solving skills, verbal and quantitative skills, motor skills, and muscle development; eye-hand coordination; and any possible learning disabilities. In making the final selections, the admissions officers try to put together a "heterogeneous group." But Irvin admits, "When you're dealing with three- and four-year-olds you have a large unknown quantity. Children are so subject to various influences. It is at best imperfect, and certainly no pure science."

Since the 1950s, psychological testing has been an important component of private school admissions, despite the misgivings of many psychologists about testing young children. Currently available psychological tests (for example the Cattell Infant Intelligence Test) purport to determine an IQ and level of maturity for infants as young as three months. The most popular tests used for pre-schoolers by private schools around Washington are the McCarthy Scales for ages two and a half to eight, The Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC).

The Meritocratic Moment

"Merit" is the abstract principle most often invoked to explain and justify the hierarchical nature of American society. Controversies like that over affirmative action have made it a staple of the political debate as well. The natural progress of American lives, especially for members of the educated elite, features a series of meritocratic crisis points—occasions when the funnel of opportunity narrows and allegedly meritocratic principles are used to determine who shall pass through. This is the fourth in an occasional series of articles examining the meritocratic machinery at work in a variety of real-life situations.

All of these are composed of building blocks, mazes, puzzles, pictures of cats, apples, cows, trees, and such. The McCarthy test evaluates "verbal ability, short term memory, numerical ability, perceptual performance, motor coordination, lateral dominance, and overall intellectual competence," according to the catalogue of its publisher, the Psychological Corporation. One admissions director said of the tests, "They're like a series of games that children enjoy. They don't even know they're being tested."

A major concern at many private nursery schools in the Washington area is preparing their children for the kindergarten admissions process. Teachers and administrators advise parents on the workings of the system, write recommendations, and try to train the children in the kinds of skills they'll need for the McCarthys, WISCs, and WPPSI. In this sense, nursery schools resemble the coaching schools that have sprouted to prepare students for the law boards and other standardized tests. Sylvia Buell, recently retired director of St. Columba's nursery school, said: "This is very much in the mind of the school I've been connected with. If you don't accept this as a real situation you are doing a disservice to the parents and the children."

Parents try many different tactics in an attempt to give their toddlers an edge in the admissions process: sending the child to a "prep" nursery school, applying early, holding practice interviews, switching religious affiliations, playing on money and connections.

At the Potomac School, said a former admissions director and current admissions board member Chris Kloman, "there are all extremes. Some parents are very nonchalant. They'll come in, go through the interviews, and do nothing else but wait to hear from the school. At the other extreme, sometimes for one applicant, five senators and a couple of bank presidents will write in saying something like, 'I don't know little Johnny but his parents are friends of mine and I'm sure he's nifty.'" Kloman admitted that the schools are not immune from such pressures, since they generally get little financial support from alumni. Sylvia Buell of St. Columba's said, "I'm very confident, after some 20 years in the business, that almost always the children of the very influential and wealthy are accepted into almost every school they apply to. I don't think that has changed."

Timing is important. Schools like Sidwell, Beauvoir, and Potomac admit about 30 four-year-olds to pre-school. After that there are very few spaces for "newcomers" except in an "expansion year," when the size of the class increases. Knowledgeable parents will send their children elsewhere to nursery school at age three to prepare them for the coming admissions challenge and then—if all goes well—withdraw them the next year to start the pre-school program at one of these desirable schools. This can be traumatic if the child is happy at the original nursery school, but it's necessary because there are fewer places after age four. One side effect of this system is that nursery schools

like St. Columba's suffer a high drop-out rate at that age. The same thing happens a few years later at places like the Potomac School, for nursery school through ninth grade. Potomac suffers a regular attrition of third- and fourth-graders whose parents can't wait to see them securely in other private schools that will see them all the way through college, like Landon (grades three through 12), National Cathedral, and St. Alban's (both grades four through 12). "A lot of people feel that if they don't get in at ground level, they'll have a tough time, and for the most part, they're right," Potomac's Kloman admitted.

The effect of this system is that nervous parents start their children working their way up through the system by the age of three, because with every year of maturity, the competition for places gets tougher; and the gulf between the advantaged few and the disadvantaged many gets larger. Starting with first grade applicants, the schools begin to test acquired skills in reading and arithmetic, and the tests expand in scope and length with each advancing grade. Three-and-a-half-hour Stanford Achievement Tests are mandatory for many aspiring third-graders, and the schools like Landon that start with that age group are as selective as the lower schools. By the sixth grade, students are taking the more comprehensive Secondary School Admissions Tests (SSATs), which are required for admission into private junior high school programs and prep schools. Generally, the seventh and eighth grades are the last chance to break into Washington's private schools. Students who haven't gotten in by then will have to make do with a public education to prepare themselves for applying to college.

Few toddlers grasp that putting a round, blue peg into a square, yellow hole during their psychological tests at age three might somehow affect their chances of getting into Harvard Law School. But this is exactly what motivates the parents. And sooner or later the anxiety of the parents is picked up by the children, especially after they go through the tests for several years in a row, after siblings and friends go off to different schools. Most educators and parents admit the pre-schoolers feel more pressure than they would like. Sylvia Buell kept posted in her office a clipping from the *Washington Post* about children in Japan committing suicide because of exam pressures. She wanted to reassure parents that by comparison the private school system isn't all that bad. To soften the blow for both children and parents, harsh terms like "accept" and "reject" are avoided. Some children are "gifted"; others are "slow in maturation." Schools "do not have space for" or "cannot place," a child or "do not feel that the applicant would be best off" at a school.

It gives one confidence about the survival of our way of life to know that by age three, some of our most promising toddlers are already learning the importance of making a good impression, cultivating useful contacts, and compiling the sort of resumes that will make them successful Americans in the years ahead.

Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Through the Years

Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the still-young German director, is an ace example of that sad modern phenomenon, the talent looking for works. Until well into this century there seemed to be no fissures between the artist—of whatever rank—and his work. Turner or Fildes, George Eliot or Marie Corelli, Brahms or Raff, artist and art seemed to go together like body and skin. But how often these days we feel about an artist, "If only he got the right ideas, how good he would be." Occasionally Fassbinder strikes it lucky (apparently the right phrase): he makes an *Effi Briest* or *Jail Bait*. Most of the time, as in the recently released *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* or *Satan's Brew* or his first English-language film *Despair* (even though it was adapted from Nabokov), there's a sense of a real ability with greased fingers—the form of the work keeps slipping through them.

It happens again in *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. The film isn't one minute old before we know we're in the hands of a skilled, unhackneyed director. The first thing we see is a picture of Hitler hanging on a wall. An explosion. The picture disappears, and through a hole blown in the wall, we see a German soldier and a girl in bridal costume whose wedding has been interrupted by aerial bombs. If that isn't succinct and graphic filmmaking, what in the world is?

And the film goes on, cinematically speaking, at that high level of selection and invention. Occasionally it lapses: when we watch a couple leave a house across the street and the camera pans to a parked car in the foreground, we know before we see him that there's a man in the car watching the pair. It's a strophe that ought to be left to TV thrillers. Mostly the film is made with freshness and precision.

But what for? What was Fassbinder being so good about? The script is by Peter Märthesheimer and Pea Fröhlich (she wrote a book about the American

avant-garde theater several years ago), with help from Fassbinder: it tells the story of that bride, who spends just one night with her husband before he leaves. After the war, she hears that he's been killed. She gets otherwise involved. He returns, and goes to jail for killing the (black) American soldier by whom she's pregnant, although it was she who broke a bottle over the soldier's head. Later, Maria gets involved with a rich businessman, although she keeps insisting—as she has done all along—that she still loves Braun and is his wife. When Braun is released from prison, he leaves Germany for a while because (we later learn) the rich man is dying and persuades Braun to let Maria be with him until he dies. Braun returns after the rich man's death. He and Maria are enriched by the dead man's will. An explosion occurs with a gas stove. Braun and Maria are blown up, fulfilling (I guess) the opening in which they were blown apart.

Now these are the details of a bizarre comedy or of a melodramatic romance, full of arbitrary turns. (Why is Maria so gifted at business, for instance?) But Fassbinder treats the story as if it were an epic of its era: stylistically, with picaresque astringency filled out at high points; atmospherically, with a freight of significant detail, like the successive pictures of all the postwar German chancellors that are shown to us after the final explosion. Why? The struggle for survival in postwar Germany is vivid in early parts, but most of the story does nothing centrally about the *Wirtschaftswunder* or about anything political or social. We get the adventures of a clever, pretty, cool woman, a soap opera held together with accidents and steered by the authors' dicta, no kind of historical epitome at all.

It's a puzzle, with one possible partial explanation. As is known, Fassbinder venerates Douglas Sirk. Sirk, born Detlev Sierck in Hamburg in 1900, had an extensive career as dramaturg and

director of distinguished plays before he went into films; emigrated to Hollywood in 1937; made there a wide variety of films but mostly melodramas; returned to Germany in the early 1960s and resumed a theater career, directing distinguished plays. In 1957 Sirk made a film called *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, adapted from a Remarque novel about postwar Germany, an American-produced film shot entirely on location. Of this picture Sirk said: "A strange kind of love story. . . . Two people are not allowed to have their love. The murderous breath of circumstances prevents them." In conjecture, Fassbinder, also a man of both theater and film, envies Sirk his American phase, his pop period, and, out of a different base, has tried to emulate it. But the result is neither sound high art nor sound pop art—just one more display of talent in an unfulfilled work.

All the more disappointing because it's well acted. Hanna Schygulla, who has been with Fassbinder since his earliest theater days, is surgically attractive as Maria. If you remember Schygulla as Effi Briest, you get an extra pleasure from her palette here. Klaus Löwitsch, the Braun, is hardbitten as a man who has learned to expect nothing but is not whipped. Ivan Desny fills out the portrait of a cultivated, melancholic businessman that he sketched in *The Wrong Move*, a Wim Wenders-Peter Handke film. Like his colleagues, Desny gives a performance too substantial for the use that the script makes of it.

Films Worth Seeing

Apocalypse Now. No kind of moral statement on Vietnam, but a marvelously sensual rendering of the first psychedelic war.

Breaking Away. Small-town adolescents—sitcom made fresh by bright dialogue and perception of class barriers.

Monty Python's Life of Brian. How Brian Cohen, born the same time and place as Jesus, gets dragooned into being a messiah. Snakily irreverent (not truly blasphemous at all), sharp, fast, biting.

The Seduction of Joe Tynan. Good slices of political life, good acting, though plot—wife battles Other Woman for husband (a rising young senator)—is weary.

SK

The first critical article I ever published—it was in 1940—was about H. G. Wells, so I have a modest proprietary interest in him. (Especially since Wells wrote me a pleasant letter about the piece.) Now Nicholas Meyer, author of *The Seven Per Cent Solution*, has written and directed a fantasy film about Wells called *Time after Time*. The earlier film was delightful, in part because it was wittily directed by Herbert Ross, in part because Meyer's screenplay (from his own novel), about a joint adventure of Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud, violated nothing that we know about either the fictional or the real man. It tickled possibility. But Meyer himself has directed this new film, sluggishly, has frequently violated what is known of Wells, and has warped Wells's interest in the time-travel idea.

The year is about 1893 at the start. Wells, who was still far from well-off, who was then separated from his first wife and living with the woman who became his second wife, is shown by Meyer to be comfortable and single. He is played by the tall and forthright Malcolm McDowell when Wells himself was short, slim, sickly (at the time), and squeaky-voiced. He is shown as shy with women—reluctant to go with a girl to her apartment—when Wells was in fact a busy womanizer who would very likely have had this girl in the hall before she had a chance to open the door. (An English woman who lived in Hampstead Heath told me once that she disliked the neighborhood because she was "absolutely surrounded by

H. G. Wells's ex-mistresses.")

And the time machine itself. Things begin to go wrong when you get the novelist actually building the machine in his cellar, but they grow worse when time travel is a device in a sex-and-murder thriller instead of the social allegory for which Wells devised it.

In the film Wells uses the machine to pursue a Jack-the-Ripper type who has previously used the machine to flee to San Francisco today. (Perhaps Meyer chose San Francisco because Wells himself inserts a fantastic whisk to that city in his screenplay *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*.) There Wells meets a girl. When anyone who has read a Wells biography learns her name, he knows the end of the story—Amy Robbins, the girl who became the second Mrs. Wells (and who in fact was already living with him in London when Meyer gives him this time trip). So Wells is going to take this San Francisco girl of today back with him to the London of 1893 and marry her. Before departing for the past, he settles the hash of the fiend who stole a ride in his machine.

The fiddling with fact would matter less if the picture were more entertaining, but one of the reasons it isn't, for me, is that, unlike the Holmes-Freud fantasy, there is no tease across the edge of likelihood. Besides, though McDowell is passable, Amy is played by Mary Steenburgen who helped to ruin Jack Nicholson's *Goin' South* and who seems even more spaced-out here. And David Warner plays the fiend. No picture with Warner can be all good.

say they in fact were the two finest. And the London Philharmonic is excellent. As for the conductors, readers of this column will by now know my enthusiasm for Levine, and I have been very excited by Jochum's recent work, especially by the late Haydn symphonies he has done for Deutsche Grammophon. But von Karajan is more of a problem.

Ever since his records first began to appear here, shortly after the war, it has been clear that he is an exceptionally gifted musician. Yet I can recall very few of his performances, whether on records or broadcasts, that have been wholly satisfying. Too often they have been marred by a glossy impersonality and by strange errors in taste—eccentric tempos, tempos too rigidly maintained, fussy phrasing. If there has been one outstanding characteristic of the von Karajan style, it has been a tendency to understate, to underplay, sometimes even to miniaturize—presumably in order to gain clarity of line. This fact is striking in view of von Karajan's famous public image: the flamboyant superstar with the hawklike profile and the beautiful young wife, piloting his own plane over the Alps or, sporting a black turtleneck and with white mane carelessly flowing, seen on the Riviera deep in conversation with one or another European captain of industry. Instead of the flamboyance and high drama that our glimpses of the public man would lead us to expect, von Karajan's work has more often been marked by an almost shrinking sensitivity, an exaggerated delicacy of feeling—not, mind you, a wholly unappealing fault but, for much of the music he chooses to conduct, a fault nonetheless. His recordings of *Tristan* and the *Ring*, for example, are, in their way, miraculous, but too often the giant Wagnerian orchestra is made to sound almost like a chamber group, an error that a far less gifted and imaginative musician like Solti, say, would never commit.

So I approached von Karajan's new Brahms symphonies with great curiosity—though also with wariness and with the firm expectation that I would prefer Levine's and perhaps also Jochum's. I was mistaken. Von Karajan's performances of these four great works are the finest I have heard since Toscanini's—by which I do not mean the LP records Toscanini made in 1951 and 1952 but the No. 1 he recorded on 78s in 1940 and various broadcasts of the others from the 1930s and 1940s. The playing of the Berlin orchestra is breath-

William Youngren on classical records

For some months now, I have kept three recent recordings of the four Brahms symphonies squirreled away on a side porch: by Eugen Jochum and the London Philharmonic on Angel set SDC-3845, along with the *Tragic* and *Academic Festival* overtures; by Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic on Deutsche Grammophon set 2711 022, along with the *Tragic* Overture; and by James Levine and the

Chicago Symphony, not yet issued as a set, the four symphonies available, respectively, on RAC discs ARL1-1326, ARL1-2864, ARL1-2097, and ARL1-2624. The summer dearth of new records has at last provided a welcome opportunity to hear and compare these Brahms performances.

Two of the orchestras, the Berlin and the Chicago, are of course among the finest in the world—many people would

takingly beautiful, especially in the elegance and refinement of wind and string tone. Small groups of instruments, whole sections, and even the whole orchestra phrase together in perfect unanimity; von Karajan's readings are totally free of the earlier impersonality and eccentricity; and he now has the absolute fingertip control over his orchestra that Toscanini had over the New York Philharmonic, that Cantelli had over the Philharmonia (and doubtless would have had over other great orchestras had he lived), and that Boulez could have had over any great orchestra he chose if his genius had so inclined him.

There are fine things in the Jochum set: a stunningly direct and steady first movement of No. 3, for example, that perhaps tops both von Karajan's and Levine's. And Jochum is admirable for his generally sane and orthodox approach to the music—an approach which can, however, sometimes lead him to be a trifle too businesslike and non-nonsense. But there are occasional oddities: worst of all, a disastrously slow tempo for the first movement of No. 4, which must be immediately revved up if the rest of the movement is to make sense and then ground back down again to make the recapitulation consistent with the opening. What finally disqualifies Jochum's performances from serious comparison to either von Karajan's or Levine's, however, is simply that the playing of the London Philharmonic is not in the same league with that of the Berlin and Chicago orchestras. The strings are occasionally ragged, the winds harsh, and there is never the effortless balance and ease that von Karajan and Levine consistently achieve. Therefore I reluctantly write off the Jochum set, despite its virtues.

To put the comparison between von Karajan and Levine in its simplest terms, I would say that von Karajan is more elegant, restrained, and inward, Levine more emphatic, tense, personal, and dramatic—which of course is not to deny that von Karajan is often splendidly dramatic and Levine often splendidly restrained and elegant. The difference is only one of general emphasis, enforced by the quite different sounds of the two orchestras: the Berlin sound is more smooth and homogeneous, with individual sections and occasional soloists embedded in the whole; the Chicago sound is sharper, more up-front, more "American," with sections and soloists often boldly standing forth.

A good touchstone is the second

movement of No. 1, the Brahms symphonic movement I have always found hardest to take. Both conductors heroically manage to avoid the dripping sentimentality that infects most performances, and even at that dreaded moment when solo violin, oboe, and horn take up the tune at octave intervals, things are kept moving along, phrases are shaped convincingly, beauty of tone and firmness of execution mercifully blind (or deafen) us to the sappiness of the music. But the two performances are very different. Von Karajan's is tender and pliant (though with plenty of power when it's needed) while Levine's is gripping and almost operatic—I kept thinking of Verdi. As for the rest of No. 1, Levine's first movement has a fine nervous quality that von Karajan's lacks, but von Karajan's third movement, suave and light, is surely better than Levine's somewhat too intense and rhythmic performance. Both finales are thrilling.

And so with the other three symphonies. In the first movements Levine is always more dramatic, his phrasing more sharply edged, with more attention called to individual events; von Karajan is more concerned with forward movement, passionate sweep, general beauty and grace. In the slow movement of No. 2 von Karajan is withdrawn and intimate while Levine lets the

big cello theme speak with a boldness and directness I had never heard before. Similarly, Levine is broadly noble in the slow movement of No. 3 where von Karajan is suave and easygoing. But in the slow movement of No. 4 it is von Karajan who is more spacious and expansive. In the third movements von Karajan is consistently more elegant and graceful and, to my mind, slightly closer to the spirit of the music slightly more of the time. But Levine gives the third movement of No. 3, another movement I have always had trouble with, an almost Mahlerian *Weltmüdigkeit* that is very convincing. The two men are closer in the finales, though Levine is less reluctant than von Karajan to let the brass speak out loud and clear in the flag-waving endings to Nos. 2 and 3. Both do the *passacaglia* finale of No. 4, Brahms's greatest movement, brilliantly, but neither can quite match the bone-shattering cumulative force that Toscanini used to give to it.

So there we are. One wants to be decisive, but the most I can say is that both performances are superb. I tend to give von Karajan a slight edge because his feel for the music and the sound of his orchestra seem to me to fulfill Brahms's intentions a little more consistently. But this is not a judgment I would push very hard. An equally good case could be made for Levine.

When drinking was a patriotic duty.

A Nation of Sots

By W. J. Rorabaugh

There is nothing new about the three martini lunch. More than 150 years ago Americans customarily gulped down three or four drinks with lunch. They drank just as heartily at dinner; a good many took eye-openers at breakfast. But, you say, what about the temperance movement? Weren't those God-fearing Americans of 1820 dry as dust? Not at all. We're talking about life

W. J. Rorabaugh is assistant professor of history at the University of Washington. This essay is based on material from *The Alcoholic Republic*, to be published by Oxford University Press in October.

in the United States before the temperance movement, before the WCTU, before Carrie Nation, and even before the idea of prohibition existed. There was a time before all those things when Americans drank as much hard liquor as they could get their hands on as often as possible. The average adult drank about three times as much alcohol in the 1820s as adults do now. And the consumption of alcohol had been growing vigorously. Between 1790 and 1830 the annual amount of hard liquor—primarily whiskey—that an average American drank nearly doubled.

All of this hearty drinking attracted a

great deal of attention. The founding fathers were quite concerned. It was not so much the use of alcohol that worried them—they all drank—as its excessive use. George Washington, a whiskey distiller himself, thought that distilled spirits were “the ruin of half the workmen in this Country.” John Adams, whose daily breakfast included a tankard of alcoholic hard cider, asked, “Is it not mortifying that we Americans should exceed all other people in the world in this degrading, beastly vice of intemperance?” And Thomas Jefferson, wine connoisseur and inventor of the presidential cocktail party, feared that the use of cheap, raw whiskey was “spreading through the mass of our citizens.” In 1821 George Ticknor, a Harvard professor, warned Jefferson, “If the consumption of spirituous liquors should increase for thirty years to come at the rate it has for thirty years back we should be hardly better than a nation of sots.” This phrase and others like it were used over and over to describe what was happening to the United States in those years.

The typical American was drinking heartily, but not all Americans drank their share. It is impossible to obtain an exact accounting, but the American Temperance Society estimated that during the late 1820s nine million women and children drank 12 million gallons of hard liquor; three million men, 60 million gallons. At this high point the average adult male was imbibing nearly a half pint a day. And there were virtually no abstainers. To refuse a drink was, at best, bad manners, at worst, an insult. A guest at an evening party might be dragged to the sideboard and forced to down glass after glass. A refusal to drink under such circumstances was viewed as proof that the abstainer thought himself better than other people. And refusing could be downright dangerous. A gang of lusty Kentuckians angry with an abstinent comrade allegedly roasted him over a fire.

Although men were the heartiest toppers, women were not faint-hearted abstainers. Little, however, can be learned about the reputed 100,000 female drunkards or the more numerous women who consumed from one-eighth to one-quarter of the nation's hard liquor. The subject received scant attention because, as one magazine explained, it was “too delicate” to be discussed. Certainly the ideal of femininity did discourage tipping, for a woman was supposed to show restraint

consistent with virtue, prudence consonant with delicacy, and a preference for beverages agreeable to a fragile constitution.

The notion of feminine delicacy led women to drink alcohol-based medicines for their health. Many women who regarded hard liquor as vulgar happily downed highly alcoholic patent medicines. One could swig Lydia Pinkham's elixir for female complaints (18 percent alcohol) without feeling that one was actually drinking. Furthermore, there were some social occasions when it was proper for women to imbibe freely and openly. For example, ladies who lived in large eastern cities drank in mixed company at society dinners, suppers, and evening parties. On the frontier at pioneer dances the “whiskey

bottle was passed pretty briskly from mouth to mouth, exempting neither age nor sex.”

Americans began to drink as children, even as babies. “I have frequently seen Fathers,” wrote Thomas O. Larkin, “wake their Child of a year old from a sound sleep to make it drink Rum, or Brandy.” As soon as a toddler was old enough to drink from a cup, he was coaxed to consume the sugary residue at the bottom of an adult's nearly empty glass of spirits. Many parents intended this early exposure to alcohol to accustom their offspring to the taste of liquor and to encourage them to accept the idea of drinking small amounts. Such exposure was supposed to protect children from becoming drunkards. But children grew up imitating their elders’

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drinking customs, and many a proud father glowed when his son became old enough to accompany him to the tavern, where they could drink as equals from the same glass.

Men from all walks of life drank lustily. If it was water that made the corn crops grow, it was corn liquor that watered the farmer. In thrifty, conservative New England, farm laborers would not work in the harvest season unless each received, in addition to his pay, a daily allowance of a half pint of hard liquor. Other parts of the country were, if anything, less sober. It was the tradition in the West for farmers to come into town on Saturday for the purpose of getting drunk. They drank and debated politics, drank some more and quarreled, until at the end they engaged in drunken brawls. The goal in a fight was to bite off the other fellow's nose or ear or to root his eyeball out of its socket and display it to the cheering crowd. All over the West one-eyed, one-eared, half-nosed combat veterans drunkenly reeled down the streets showing off their battle scars as badges of honor.

Drinking was part of southern life, too. The slaves were prohibited from drinking by law, but it was a law not often enforced. Nevertheless, liquor was more readily available to the planter. He clutched the cold glass of a mint julep in his hand on the hot veranda as a reminder that all was well with the world. Drinking was so well established that one planter was able to maintain his good standing in the Methodist Church by pledging that he would restrict his daily intake of alcohol to a quart of peach brandy.

City dwellers also had their sprees and frolics. It was customary for workmen to drink not only during midmorning and midafternoon breaks but also on a great number of special occasions. The shop must drink when a new man arrived or an old one departed, when a man married or had a child, or when an apprentice came of age. There were numerous fines—levied in alcohol—as a consequence of shop rules that the employees had enacted for the purpose of obtaining liquor. Nor was imbibing limited to business hours. Shops had their favorite watering holes. At the end of the day many workmen went directly from work to the tavern, where they spent their wages, stayed late, and often brawled in the streets afterward. On the weekends, after work had ended on Saturday afternoon, many drank so heartily that they missed work on

Monday. Taking Monday off became so common that the day was derisively called Saint Monday. (Some workers celebrated Saint Tuesday as well.) Excessive drinking was such an accepted part of American life that in 1829 the secretary of war estimated that three-quarters of the nation's laborers drank at least four ounces of hard liquor daily. Some indulged to a greater extreme. Construction workers on the railroads, mostly Irish immigrants, downed from six to eight glasses of whiskey a day. Somehow, the tracks were laid straight.

Certain lines of work were associated with extreme overindulgence in alcohol. Stagecoach drivers were hearty toppers. They explained to their alarmed

claimed his profession to be the most besotted. This claim was disputed by those who contended that the greatest drunkards were physicians.

Americans drank in a variety of places, including, of course, taverns and inns. Most liquor, however, was drunk in the home. Whiskey provided mealtime drinks, customary refreshers, and hospitable treats for guests. Fashionable people owned ornate liquor cases or elaborate sideboards that contained numerous bottles or decanters of various cordials, including mild, sweet, fruit-flavored elixirs for the ladies. Even the poorest host proffered his jug of whiskey. Alcohol also had other uses at home. The lady of the house kept a good



passengers that whiskey kept them warm and protected them from the winds that whipped across the drivers' exposed position atop the stages. River raftsmen were notorious sots, steamboat crews were no more sober, and sailors, perhaps, were worse. One tar recalled a voyage during which an Atlantic storm had so tossed about the deck cargo that a barrel of rum broke open. As the rum flooded the deck, the crew "went down on their stomachs and drank their fill and more." Sailors in the US Navy were so attached to their four-ounce-a-day ration of rum and water grog that Congress refused, until the Civil War, to abolish a custom deemed essential to recruitment.

The middle classes were scarcely more sober. US Customs officers boarded ships while intoxicated, and there were congressional clerks who could not write legibly until they had steadied their hands by taking liquid refreshment. Inebriation was so prevalent among the nation's lawyers that one

supply of hard liquor in her kitchen. She found it an excellent preservative and an important ingredient in her cooking. Liquor was also found in the home medicine chest. A swig of whiskey may not have had much medical benefit, but it was less harmful than many of the prevailing forms of medical treatment. Physicians frequently cast the bottle aside in favor of leeches—and promptly bled their patients to death.

Leaving home did not require an American to forgo his favorite beverage. When journeying by stagecoach, travelers could obtain whiskey at the inns where the horses were changed. During one arduous trip across Virginia that covered 66 miles in 17 hours, the stage stopped 10 times. Two of the passengers had drinks at each stop: 10 drinks apiece. Such habits led one foreign traveler to conclude that "the American stage coach stops every five miles to water the horses, and brandy the gentlemen!"

Americans drank on all occasions.

Every social event demanded a drink. When southerners served barbecue, they roasted hogs and provided plenty of whiskey. Guests were expected to obey the barbecue law, which held that everyone drink to intoxication. The only excuse for refusing a drink was having passed out. At city dances and balls the participants were often intoxicated. So were the spectators at horse races. In the West it was the custom to present newlyweds with a bottle of whiskey to be drunk before bedding down for the night. Liquor also entered into money-making and business affairs. When a bargain was struck, a deal made, or a contract signed, it was sealed with a drink. In rural areas whiskey accompanied such traditional community activities as house-raising, huskings, land-clearing, and reaping. Building a new church called for a barrel or more of hard liquor for the workmen, and when a minister was ordained plenty of alcohol was provided. Whiskey was even served when women gathered to sew, quilt, or pick the seeds out of cotton.

Rivers of liquor also flowed at public meetings. Militiamen elected their officers with the expectation that the elected officers would treat the men at the militia musters held four times a year. One newly elevated colonel pledged, "I can't make a speech, but what I lack in brains I will try and make up in rum." At trials it was common for the bottle to be passed among spectators, attorneys, clients—and to the judge.

Alcohol played an even more important role at elections. Voters demanded and received liquor in exchange for their ballots. That liquor elected incompetents and the lack of it defeated able men was widely conceded. "I guess Mr. A. is the fittest man of the two," said one South Carolina woman, "but t'other whiskies the best."

Why did Americans in those days drink so much? One reason was a hearty drinking tradition that dated back to the earliest colonial days. While it is true that the Puritans did not approve of public drunkenness, they were not abstainers. "Drink," said Increase Mather in 1673, "is in itself a creature of God, and to be received with thankfulness." The Puritans thought rum, gin, and brandy to be nutritious and healthful. These distilled spirits were viewed as foods that supplemented limited and often monotonous diets. They were seen as medications that could cure colds, fevers, snakebites, frostbitten toes, and broken legs. The Puritans even believed hard liquor to be

a recreational drug that would relieve depression, reduce tension, and enable hard-working laborers to enjoy themselves. These old ideas about the virtues of alcohol were popular in the 1820s.

Americans had another important reason to drink highly alcoholic distilled liquor. In the years after the American Revolution pioneer farmers had begun to settle the Ohio River valley. This region was destined to become America's great corn belt. But in those first years of settlement the pioneers had no local market for their corn and no easy way to transport it across the Allegheny Mountains to the cities of the East. A horse would eat more grain on his trip to the East than he could carry on his back. The western farmers discovered that if they distilled their corn into whiskey, they could then ship it to the East at a profit. But as more and more farmers distilled their corn into whiskey, a whiskey surplus developed. The price of whiskey then fell. By the 1820s in some places whiskey cost less than 25 cents a gallon—under a nickel a fifth. Whiskey was cheaper than beer, wine, milk, coffee, or tea. Indeed, the only beverage that was cheaper was water, which was often dangerously polluted. Americans who believed the old Puritan ideas that hard liquor was nutritious and healthful found all this cheap, abundant whiskey to be a god-

send. A patriotic cult enveloped whiskey. It was, after all, a native American product made from corn, a native American grain. "Why," asked distiller Harrison Hall, "should not our countrymen have a national beverage?"

Why not, indeed. Whiskey became the national beverage. Its abundant and even overabundant use crossed regional, sexual, racial, and class lines. What happened to change all this? About 1825 a number of Americans became alarmed by all the drinking. The doctors announced that alcohol was not nutritious and healthful. The ministers denounced alcohol as the devil's work—the Demon Rum. Industry was just starting up, and factory owners were convinced that drinking was dangerous for the health of their workers, as well as for their profits. The factory owners told their workmen to quit drinking, and, to set an example, they had to quit themselves. The drunken steamboat crews who had played with the lives of their passengers gave way to sober railroad locomotive engineers who had to be abstainers in order to qualify for their jobs. The job became more important, and Americans began to view drinking as a waste of money. Liquor was charged with creating poverty, poor health, and immorality. So Americans stopped drinking so heartily. We did not become a nation of sots. At least not yet.

Restricting Handguns: The Liberal Skeptics Speak Out

edited by Don B. Kates Jr.

(North River Press; \$9.95, \$5.95 paper)

Jews for Jesus we could understand. He was one after all. Even Democrats for Nixon was no worse than one expected in politics. But liberals for handguns! It's as if the veil was lifted and we beheld Martin Luther King sitting on the throne with John Wayne on one side of him and Frank Rizzo on the other.

Yet despite its provocative title, this collection of essays is much more than an announcement of some perverse apostasy. The contributors, led by the editor, Don B. Kates Jr., do indeed sport glittering liberal credentials. They are mostly lawyers, wearing the insignia of

one wing of the legal intelligentsia as it moves from youth into middle age—here an editor of his school's law review, there a general counsel to Amnesty International. One is an adviser to the United States Civil Rights Commission, three are professors, several are former Freedom Riders or civil rights workers, one of whom (a woman) was honorably imprisoned in Parchman Penitentiary. They have fired off what we should expect from such a formidable squad: a target-riddling fusillade against proposals for a general ban on possession of handguns.

Their case joins utilitarian with moral reasons. Making possession of handguns illegal on a national basis holds no promise, they argue, of reducing the number of murders and other violent crimes. There are countries that do ban guns strictly (like Mexico and Jamaica) but have a worse rate of murder and violence than we do, and there are other countries (like Switzerland and Israel) that require adult males to keep firearms for military reasons yet have far fewer murders than the United States. America is really the arsenal of democracy, loaded with untold millions of handguns, and criminals (or those determined to defend themselves) will never have much trouble getting hold of a gun, whatever the law may say. Some criminologists question the popular assumption that many murders are committed just because an angry person has a gun lying around. Most gun murders, they suggest, would probably be committed in some other way if a gun were not on hand. Indeed, the rate of death from handgun wounds is hardly higher than the mortality from wounds inflicted by large knives or blunt instruments.

A strict ban on handguns, these writers argue, would be not only ineffective but even counterproductive. Attempts to execute such laws would take up law-enforcement time and resources that could be better spent directly suppressing crime. Handgun restrictions would supply another sharp motive for unconstitutional searches and would work unfairly as they always have done. The first gun control laws in the United States were directed at disarming blacks and immigrants. Today those who support gun control are mostly white, upper-middle-class intellectuals, officials, and some politicians, the kind of people who need guns for defense less than others and who can generally get a pistol permit if they want one. But the poor and minorities, the ghetto residents who cannot be protected by the police, are denied the means to defend themselves.

Women, the book suggests, are especially discriminated against by gun control. Violent husbands and lovers, rapists, and other vengeful men con-

tinue the age-old physical subjugation and destruction of women who, without the equalizing magic of the gun, must suffer and live in fear. Perhaps men even discourage possession of guns by women because of an unacknowledged, shameful wish to maintain their physical sovereignty. Having a gun would give women "for the first time in history, the capacity to live independently and apart from men in safety and freedom."

This last passage has the air of exuberant advocacy of handgun ownership, at least for women, for who would not choose secure independence over quaking servitude? While several of the contributors dutifully intone that they are only defending the freedom for everyone to own a gun (except those with a record of criminal conviction or drug abuse), there can be no doubt that it is a freedom they would be happy to see exercised. "The philosophy of self-defense," writes Professor Kates, "prepares one to evaluate realistically a potentially violent world and respond with a minimum degree of violence necessary to cope with it." Since we can't stop criminals from having handguns, we are better off if peaceful folk can defend themselves. There is no way to achieve that without arming the law-abiding.

This vision of a nation of righteous gun-slingers rising up to smite the mugger hip and thigh has an enduring appeal for Americans who (like Afrikaners) are captivated by images of sturdy farmers setting down the billhook to take up the rifle. But if all of us were always "packing" and spent half an hour a day on the target range instead of jogging, what would come of it? No doubt some people who would otherwise be the victims of crime would defend themselves effectively but, to set against this, there are questions to ask and dangers to reflect on.

Since the practicality and effectiveness of regulation is one of the authors' major themes, we are entitled to inquire in turn into the effectiveness of gun owning as a means of self defense. Carol Silver and Professor Kates in the chapter on women and handguns refer frequently to keeping a gun "ready" for defense. How exactly is this to be done? Are gunbelts to come into fashion? Where would a women conceal a holster? Unfortunately muggers and rapists don't know enough cricket to desist from garrotting while we fumble in briefcase or purse for our trusty Smith and Wesson. Should we, then, all go about gun in hand at all

times, home or abroad?

Echoing Mayor Rizzo, the authors frequently tell us that it's a jungle out there. Among many anecdotes they offer one about a women reporter in St. Louis who could not get an armed police officer to escort her into a housing project to do an interview because it was too dangerous. The police in St. Louis, it seems, will only enter the ghetto in shotgun-equipped cars which they rarely leave. But it does not seem to have occurred to the authors that, if the housing project in the ghetto is too dangerous for armed police, a gun in the purse of a lone civilian will hardly frighten off the banditti.

The coarse briskness of these conclusions is matched by the glibness of some of the assumptions running through this book, notably the swift dismissal of the thesis that the ready availability of guns is a significant cause of crime. Fourteenth-century peasants, we are told, went at each other with agricultural implements; today it's guns. Violent people will use whatever weapons they can get and will always be dangerous. Perhaps so, but if guns are not especially deadly or efficient at disabling, why do the authors recommend them so strongly as the only effective form of defense? Why don't they suggest that we carry stilettos? This inconsistency recurs as a disturbing theme throughout this book. The deadliness of handguns when used by criminals is downgraded, but in the hands of the victim the gun becomes the potent Excalibur of justice. In this unscholarly departure from the standard of much of the work in this book, science yields to emotion and one detects a powdery whiff of the familiar propaganda tract produced by those who are conducting an open love affair with handguns.

It must be said that the central theme of this book is a counsel of despair. Civilization, we are asked to believe, has broken down in America; the laws and institutions of the state no longer offer minimal protection; people must now fend for themselves in a brutish state of nature and the only hope is that the good guy will be quicker on the draw than the bad guy. This may of course be the future that awaits us, but it surely hasn't yet arrived. A certain incidence of crime and violence is different from the collapse of order, a distinction that this book fails to draw. It is a singular omission, because the distinction is vital to the concept of being a liberal, which surely depends on the presence of a

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degree of ordered civilization. If hideous danger lurks all around at all times, if we really live in *nacht und nebel*, then we'd be foolish not to carry a gun. But if that is a fair account one wonders what business the authors have calling themselves "liberals." Can one be a liberal amidst the collapse of social living when survival depends on constant readiness for armed combat?

Before rushing to embrace so vastly depairing a thesis, it would at least be prudent to question some large assumptions that the authors make. If gun control has done no good in Mexico or Jamaica (which officials in those countries might not concede), can we know that it will not work in the United States, where it has never been tried on a national basis? Do the comparisons made in this book between handgun control and the failure of criminal laws on pot smoking and the sale of alcohol have any validity? It is now known that marijuana is not a direct cause of crime and, if used moderately, is probably not seriously harmful to the user. Alcohol, on the other hand, is an important cause of crime and violence and, for that reason alone, Prohibition should be counted as a noble experiment. But alcohol also has an ancient place in social rituals; it is associated with celebration, relaxation, and erotic encounters. Its abuse is ugly and dangerous, but for the law to try to deny the use of liquor was to try to eradicate social habits handed down over millennia. Handguns do not have this benevolent tradition, and one can't shoot people moderately. Handguns are good only for two things—target-shooting as a sport (which is not the concern of the authors of this book), and wounding or killing people. As to wounding and killing, it is important to distinguish between such acts when done criminally and when done as lawful self-defense in response to a life-threatening attack. But self-defense is a concept of some moral and legal complexity that is never confronted in this book.

When exactly would the gun-carrying but law-abiding citizen be justified in shooting someone? For any assault or theft? At the first alarming approach or conceivably threatening gesture of someone who just might be a rapist? Would general arming for self-defense not be an indirect way of extending capital punishment to many offenses not subject to that penalty by law? These are moral questions to which the liberal tradition demands sensitivity but which these writers fail to identify.

Instead, the covert message of this book is that bad people deserve to be shot and that well-meaning violence generally succeeds. Several of the admiring references to the civil rights movement in the 1960s are to blacks who armed themselves to shoot it out with threatening Klansmen. That was a response that we can justify and applaud, but it is as well to remember that in real life wicked violence often prevails over righteous force. In the end it was not guns but the nonviolent movement presided over by Martin

Luther King Jr. that secured change by disturbing the conscience of the nation. For all its useful questioning of the arguments advanced by advocates of handgun prohibition, omissions of this kind leave the legitimacy of this book's liberal pedigree in considerable doubt.

Graham Hughes

Graham Hughes is professor of law at New York University and author, most recently, of *The Conscience of the Courts* (Anchor Press: Doubleday).

Fascist Intellectual: Drieu La Rochelle by Robert Soucy

(University of California Press; \$20)

Among the French writers who became Fascists and later collaborationists during the German occupation, three were distinguished authors: Céline, Brasillach, and Drieu La Rochelle. They came to different ends. Céline returned to France after a long exile in Denmark; Brasillach was tried shortly after the Liberation, found guilty, and shot; Drieu tried to commit suicide just before the Allies reached Paris, failed, went into hiding in Paris for several months, and killed himself in March 1945 when his arrest was ordered by the authorities. All three are candidates for psychohistory, since their political views, enthusiasms, and hatreds are unmistakably close to their private afflictions and neuroses.

Céline, of course, has been treated as a great innovative writer. Brasillach has become a symbol of martyrdom for the unrepentant survivors of collaborationism or fascism. While Céline accompanied the remains of Vichy regime and of the pro-Nazi "parties" to Germany, both Brasillach and Drieu had become quietly disillusioned by 1943. Lately, it is Drieu who has received the most attention. It all began with Louis Malle's fine movie of Drieu's story "The Fire Within," in the 1960s. This year, three big books have been devoted to him. First came a subjective biographical essay by an ex-communist intellectual, Dominique Desanti, which many critics deemed strangely indulgent and sympathetic, but which I found full of insights, more

concerned with the human being than with his politics, and well served by the frequent comparisons the author makes with Aragon—Drieu's close friend in their Surrealist days until their break over politics and women—and Malraux, who remained Drieu's friend until the end and protected him in 1944-45. Next came a massive biography by two men who had already written about Drieu with admiration, the Frenchman Pierre Andreu (who had shared Drieu's outlook) and the American critic Frederic Grover. Now we have *Fascist Intellectual* by Robert Soucy, an American historian of French fascism, author of a similar work on Maurice Barrès.

It is not an easy book to read. The first chapter is a long string of quotations about Drieu (one is attributed to the poet Robert Desnos writing in 1955—many years after his death as victim of a concentration camp). Soucy's method, which consists of devoting two chapters to Drieu's life, six to the main themes of his political writings, and three to a psychological (indeed, psychoanalytical) examination of his personality, somehow makes for a maximum of repetition. But it is not all Soucy's fault. What makes the book at times tedious or even exasperating is Drieu himself. It is Soucy's merit that he treats Drieu's ideas seriously, and does a convincing job—with practically no jargon or heavy breathing in exposing the flaws of Drieu's character, in addition to those of his doctrines. Drieu's ideas were a terrible jumble of clichés, half-baked

notions, and contradictions. If ever a French intellectual deserved to be denounced for "literary politics," Drieu did. His fascism derived from his cult of manliness, youth, the body, and force. What attracted him (but not for long) to the French fascist leader Doriot, and also to Hitler, was a mix of romanticism (the return to nature and the celebration of passion over flabby reason) and tough Darwinian realism. He proclaimed himself a Fascist Socialist, but his economic views were totally shallow: his socialism was predominantly petit bourgeois, concerned not with the welfare of the poor but with the virtues of asceticism, and based on contempt for France's high bourgeoisie. And yet at one time he had argued for a capitalist dictatorship! But this was not the only contradiction: on nationalism, on Germany, on Jews, on communism, on the respective virtues of thought and action, it is all too easy to find opposite views, always glib. What was constant was his quest for force, his search for an elite; what finally disappointed him in nazism was that it had not been dynamic, ascetic, and tough enough!

The only way to take Drieu's views seriously is to see them, as Soucy does, as projections of a personality suffused with weakness and self-hatred. As a child, he deeply resented his father, who kept humiliating him for being a sissy, yet he adopted his father's ideal of virility. He projected on France his contempt for what he felt to be his own decadence—his love affairs with rich women, in the beginning at least, were sexual fiascos, he could "perform" only with prostitutes, he remained childless. He denounced the rich bourgeois but lived off them. (For his last 10 years, his mistress was the wife of Louis Renault, the car manufacturer, one of France's wealthiest men.) He dreamed of a Spartan society but liked luxury. He was obsessed with courage and war, yet his actual combat experience in World War I was brief (four months), and he was exempted from the draft in World War II. He felt that being a writer was not manly enough, yet could not be anything else. "He loved force, but lacked force," and loathed his own failures and sloth.

Soucy shows how much Adorno's classic model of the authoritarian personality applies to Drieu—especially in his relation to his father, and in his sexuality and dealings with women, whom he wanted to dominate but by whom he felt threatened. Soucy calls him "a narcissist of the most dangerous

kind, one who had himself been so emotionally wounded by others that he closed off his emotions even to those whose sufferings paralleled his own"—which may explain his abstract regret about Hitler's failure to shed enough blood, and his indifference to Nazi horrors in France. Soucy is also right in concluding that Drieu's cult of virility was destructive of himself: even if nazism had not collapsed, suicide would have been the logical outcome of Drieu's failure to live up to his own standards. (There are fascinating similarities and differences with Mishima, who had the same cult of the body and of youth, but whose homosexuality was overt, and whose sado-masochism was far more intense.)

Soucy's accurate portrait of Drieu is most unappetizing. What, then, explains the attraction of Drieu for many of his contemporaries and for many readers today? Certainly not his essays; not even his novels, which are endless self-absorbed exercises in introspection in which only one character comes alive—Drieu himself. Only *Gilles* really survives, as an autobiographical chronicle of France between the wars, seen from the fascist right, and as a *roman à clef*. I think the fascination lies partly in the extraordinary appeal failure seems to

have for the French, partly in the very contradiction between Drieu's ideals and his life. The would-be hero was a soft hedonist, the would-be conqueror of women in fact appealed to their pity, the champion of toughness got his first wife (who was Jewish) and her children from another marriage released from a German camp, the editor of the prestigious *Nouvelle Revue Française* under German control protected such *résistants* as the writer Jean Paulhan. He was a dilettante of politics, and the only thing he could not bear was his own weakness. This very weakness removes him from the category of tragic heroes—he wasn't tragic, and he wasn't a hero. But there was something pathetic in the ultimate loneliness of a man "covered with women" (to use the title of one of his novels), acquainted with the whole French literary establishment, yet doomed to see in the *Götterdämmerung* of nazism the collapse of his own delusions and projections.

Stanley Hoffmann

Stanley Hoffmann is professor of government at Harvard and author, most recently, of *Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (McGraw-Hill).

The Challenge of the Mahatmas by Martin Green

(Basic Books; \$10.95)

Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire by Martin Green

(Basic Books; \$15)

"Martin Green—an oddball, isn't he?" This is what a respected friend said when I mentioned that I was about to review *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, the second volume of Green's projected trilogy, *The Lust for Power*. And my friend was right; Green is an oddball, maybe even a deliberate oddball. At a time when criticism in England and America is becoming increasingly structuralist, recondite, and often all but impenetrably hermetic, he remains an unregenerate and unashamed searcher-out of the moral, rather than the

semiotic structures of literature. In this decade, this long and painful hangover from the mad 1960s, most teachers seem more than content to swear off that poisonous cocktail, "politics and literature," altogether, but Green keeps right on insisting that the books we read, and the ways we read them, can or ought to make a difference in the way we live. And finally, while the literary-theory establishment has more or less reconciled itself to a splendid isolation from the ordinary concerns of living—the academy as lamasery—Green con-

tinues to say things like the following, from the first page of *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*: "I have addressed my argument, as always, to the general reader. (I keep hoping he exists, or can be conjured into existence by the sound of a voice.)" In other words, an oddball. And probably just the oddball we need right now.

He comes by his oddity, as they used to say, honestly. A working-class Englishman, a scholarship student who has spent most of his career in America, and a Roman rather than an Anglican Catholic, he is practiced at being an outsider. And among his most revered precursors are two great outsiders, F. R. Leavis and George Orwell. Green studied under Leavis (another working-class boy who, for that reason, was never fully accepted at Cambridge). And like almost everyone who knew Leavis in his prime, he has carried into his own writing the moral urgency, the insistence on reading as a form of ethics, that informs books like Leavis's *Revaluation* and *The Great Tradition*. And of course from Orwell, especially from great essays like "Politics and the English Language," Green learned (and, to his credit, never forgot) the lesson that a man of letters, at his best, can and should be also a man.

To be sure, all this makes Martin Green sound rather intense, perhaps even overanxious. And it has to be said that he is that, too. The impulse to be good—really and truly good—is both so elementary and so damnably complicated a part of civilization that no one who falls prey to it is likely to keep his balance. But that, too, is a reason to value his work. He *doesn't* keep his balance, his passions and anxieties are in the very fabric of his prose—and he does what a certain kind of critic (arguably, the best kind) can do with such anxieties. He turns them, through intelligence and unrelenting honesty, into moral perceptions.

As a case in point, take a passage like the following, from *The Challenge of the Mahatmas*, the first volume of *The Lust for Power*. Green is arguing that the only responsible choice for men of letters is to adopt a Gandhi-like stance, saintly in its distance from things of this world, toward even the beauties and splendors of literature itself. "All we can aim at," he writes, "is to save our honor. The world, surely we all know, is doomed. Presumably in our lifetime its end will come. But to presume is presumptuous. All that I am concerned with here is sincerity."

How lugubrious, one thinks at first reading. How unjust in its pessimism and, besides that, how flat-footedly expressed (among Leavisites, of course, an ugly prose style is almost a membership badge, an earnest that one is not deceived by the fripperies of mere aestheticism). But look at what else is going on in that passage. On the basis of his absolute mistrust of the world, Green manages to use two words—"honor" and "sincerity"—that our whole century has taught us *not* to use. And they are, moreover, two of the words that make the world—*this* world—habitable for human beings.

The Lust for Power, at least in the two volumes that have so far appeared, is an immense quilt of such paradoxically despairing and hopeful insights into Western thought and writing. It all grows out of a trip Green took to India in 1975. There, much like his near-namesake Graham Greene in Africa, he found himself forced to confront and meditate upon the history and the psychic cost of Western imperialism, and particularly upon the ways that the lust for power, for control, for dominance at all cost, has tainted even the most purely imaginative writing of the last 300 years. Now this is a disturbing, disorienting insight, especially if you have spent your life believing in and arguing for literature as a moral force. And when Martin Green is disturbed and disoriented, he writes a book—or books.

The Challenge of the Mahatmas, in fact, is probably as close as we can come to witnessing the activity of an acute intelligence wrestling with its own self-doubts and contradictions. For when Green returned to Tufts University from India, he presented his impressions—and therefore the germinal ideas of *The Lust for Power*—in a series of seven informal talks to a group of students. And those talks, intercalated with longer, explanatory, and expansive chapters, are reproduced in the first book of the trilogy. It makes for fascinating, bracing reading, since the effect is precisely that of hearing a man decide what he really thinks at the moment he decides what he thinks. It is also terribly frustrating for the kind of reader who believes that books should establish their universal certainties at the beginning and demonstrate them with unrelenting logic: but that, of course, is almost the point.

The Mahatmas, or "great souls," of Green's title are Tolstoy and Gandhi. And their challenge, at its simplest and most frightening, is that they *are* great

souls, saints if you will, and that their sanctity, their austere spirituality, shrivels our ordinary liberal humanism to derision. Their message is that the soul matters more than anything else, even than art, and that whatever does not nurture the soul destroys it—even if it is art. Now this is a corrosive attitude to take toward the humanist tradition. And humanists have generally managed to avoid taking it by assuming that Tolstoy, in his late, primitive-Christian phase, was senile, and that Gandhi, throughout his life, was an heroic but unredeemable lunatic.

Green, though, accepts the challenge they offer head-on. And that acceptance itself may be the most Gandhian act he performs. The besetting and besotting corruption of the West, for the last 300 years at least, has, according to Green, been the imperial world-system, the massive and complex chain of economic, political, and imaginative trammels through which we have enslaved, denatured, and finally threatened with extinction the other inhabitants of the planet. To be sure, this is not news. Marx said it, Wells said it, Michel Foucault has argued it in a series of brilliant volumes of social history, and

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Susan Sontag, only a decade ago, uttered the famous and summary phrase, "the white race is the cancer of history." But, Green insists, for all the obviousness of this multinational cancer, no one has yet identified the right cure. One option for cure is the revolutionary one (Marx and, in his way, the later Wells)—to fix the system, that is, by substituting another one. It has been a failure. So has the second alternative, the liberal-humanist stance defined by Foucault and Sontag or, in their very different ways, Leavis and Orwell: to insist, that is, that intelligence alone is enough to see us through, and that we needn't change the system at all because all systems are only distorted masks for the elementary, immutable human truths. What is left, then, except the way of the Mahatmas, the admission that this world, this tradition, this splendid accumulation of imaginative and technological brilliance, is only a veil thrown over a loathsome, monstrous distortion of humanity?

"If the killer thinks he kills and if the killed man thinks he is killed, neither of these apprehends aright. The Self kills not, nor is It killed." So runs the great passage of the *Katha Upanishad*. And though Green does not cite it, nor mention Gandhi's knowledge of it, its stunning assertion is close to the center of both volumes of *The Lust for Power*. According to Green, at least, the imperialist imagination (both literary and political) is the division of the world into "killers" and "killed men," victimizers and victimized, masters and slaves. And the true Mahatma-sense is, among other things, the sense—that goes beyond Marx or Leavis—that all this elaborate fiction is simply *maya* or illusion, a delusory web whose insubstantiality the true soul will penetrate. Gandhi thought all poetry and fiction at best embellishments to the simple purity of the life he envisioned and led. Tolstoy, a supremely great artist in his middle years, in his later years thought poetry and fiction at their worst soul-destroying perversions. Both Green's heroes, in other words, thought and lived themselves past entrapment in the divisive fictions of killers and men killed.

But killers and men killed are, of course, not only the central elements of imperialist politics; they are also the indispensable characters of the adventure story, that perennial archetype of popular literature which, from *Robinson Crusoe* to *The Spy Who Loved Me*, has incarnated the aspirations and obsessions for control of the imperialist

vision. In *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, Green attempts the difficult task of uniting his newfound Mahatma-sense of things to a perception of the English and American literary tradition. His hope is that, by looking closely at the structures of triumph, control, or dominance in the adventure novel (particularly Defoe, Scott, Cooper, Tolstoy, Twain, Kipling, and Conrad), we can bring ourselves to an understanding of the mechanisms of power underlying our myths, and thereby liberate ourselves into charity; think ourselves beyond killer and killed to an imagination of the original, imperishable Self that does not die.

An analysis of political ideology in adventure fiction of the 18th and 19th centuries could be either a shrill diatribe against Western man's cosmic megalomania, or a complex survey of the subtle ways social conditioning influences our whole imaginative life—a kind of literary *Capital*. Green has written neither, and perhaps we should be grateful on both counts. What he has done is to create a moral context for the reading and teaching of literature that, for all its partialities, reminds us that criticism can be a humanizing activity.

His major terms, as a literary sociologist, come from the still powerful system of Max Weber. What distinguishes the modern, European system of imperialism from its predecessors is, according to this analysis, precisely its avoidance of the militaristic, heroic trappings of traditional (Roman or Oriental) imperialism. So that by not thinking of itself as an empire, the European, especially the British-American world-system, becomes a more efficient empire than any yet created. In terms of literary typology, those permanent figures of the imperial imagination, the king and the knight, are replaced by the humbler but more dispassionately effective subduer of "native" populations, the merchant. *Don Quixote*, in Green's brilliant reading of the history of fiction, is a bittersweet, affectionate farewell to an idea already moribund, and *Robinson Crusoe* is the transformation of that idea into its modern form: the form of the adventurer as practical man, as technologist, as passionate only for order and security. It is not, after all, a long step from this transformation of the romance knight to James Bond, the technologist par excellence, servant of an expansionist ethics both dazzlingly efficient and terrifyingly cold.

But an empire is an empire, even when

it doesn't want to believe that it is. And much of Green's energy in *Dreams of Adventure* is directed toward tracing the ways the earlier knightly or, in his phrase, "aristomilitary caste" elements of romance reintroduce themselves into even mercantile, bourgeois fictions of human behavior. In Scott, Cooper, and Conrad especially, the merchant-adventurer tends to live through a series of events that reestablish, however indirectly, his claims to be the true and predestined knight of Europe's manifest destiny. The idea of the Quest of the Grail, in other words, translates more easily than one would wish into the vicious rhetoric of *Realpolitik* and *Lebensraum*.

On the other side of the quarrel Green traces are novelists like Tolstoy, Twain, and Kipling—all of whom understand more fully than their "aristomilitary" compeers the brutal underside of the mercantile-imperial myth of adventure, even while they are equally drawn to it. Frantz Fanon says somewhere that the word "native" is one of the first manifestations of imperialism: because only when you colonize a place do you begin to distinguish between the culture-bearing colonizers and the unenlightened "native" population of the place. A generation of anthropologists, after the pioneering work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, has taught us how fictive that distinction between "cultured" and "native" really is. Martin Green demonstrates the perennial pressure of

that special attitude in the fiction of the last 200 years, and in demonstrating that, shows us how morally questionable are some of even our most cherished fictions.

To do this, to be sure, is to strike a cranky and maybe even a disingenuous attitude; and Green is honest enough to admit that, for all his admiration of Gandhi and the later Tolstoy, he is still, like the rest of us, mired in the confused and confusing sensibility of the liberal humanist. Otherwise, of course, he would stop doing literary criticism altogether and enroll in the nearest ashram. But despite that, *The Lust for Power* continues to hold up as a trilogy of intense and intensely moral speculation. The third volume, we are told, will contain full-scale biographies of Tolstoy and Gandhi. And by now, from this and from Green's other writing, we know what we can expect from it: partisan, argumentative, inelegantly articulated, and also passionate and bracing thought about the relations of life and literature at their most risky and most important level. The continued cogitations, in other words, of a gifted and admirable oddball.

Frank McConnell

Frank McConnell is associate professor of English at Northeastern University and author, most recently, of *Four Postwar American Novelists: Bellow, Mailer, Barth and Pynchon* (University of Chicago).

Burger's Daughter by Nadine Gordimer

(Viking; \$10)

In *Burger's Daughter*, Nadine Gordimer explores the ways in which South Africans assert their humanity against the organized inhumanity we know as apartheid. She examines the immense moral and physical difficulties of this task while telling the story of Rosa Burger. The daughter of a prosperous Afrikaaner doctor, Lionel Burger, Rosa is born into what appears to be an ideal South African family. But instead of championing the privileges of his race and class, Lionel Burger has chosen to betray them to struggle for a socialist

society where race will no longer be a weapon of domination. Fighting apartheid as members of the South African Communist party, he and his wife Cathy create a household where the "definition of loneliness" is "to live without social responsibility." Surreptitious political gatherings, police surveillance, raids, and jailings become part of the normal rituals of family life. Rosa's upbringing resembles an apprenticeship for future revolutionary activity. As a child she sneaks a message to her jailed mother by wrapping a piece of

paper around the stopper in a hot water bottle. As a teenager her first "romance" is a ruse to allow her to transmit information to and from a political prisoner who is supposedly her fiancé. And as a young woman she learns about ultimate sacrifice as she helplessly watches her father condemned to life imprisonment for treason.

It is assumed by the government and by the Burgers' coterie of radical friends that Rosa will continue her family's activist tradition. But her father's death in prison jars her belief in the certainties that had long made sacrifice immune to the erosions of doubt. Overwhelmed by the seeming futility of her parents' efforts, Rosa remarks that "even animals have the instinct to turn away from suffering. The sense to run away." And so she does, first to southern France, where she falls in love with a Parisian schoolteacher, and then to England, where she continues the affair. In London, however, the easy, narcissistic life Rosa adopts as a traveler confronts the harshness of political engagement as she encounters South African émigrés pursuing the anti-apartheid struggle from abroad. She returns home to work in a black hospital and eventually begins resistance work

again. Lionel Burger once declared that "there will always be those who cannot live with themselves at the expense of fullness of life for others." Rosa's reaffirmation of her parents' legacy marks her as one of those happy few about whom her father spoke. Not surprisingly, the novel closes with Rosa in jail.

The plot of *Burger's Daughter* teems with dramatic potential: a small band of rebels facing impossible odds fight on for racial justice while alienated from the very people they hope to liberate because of the privileges they yearn to destroy. Yet Gordimer fails, in large



photo of Nadine Gordimer by Hugo Cassirer

Her most skillfully wrought portrait is of Brandt Vermeulen, an unapologetic proponent of apartheid. What makes Gordimer's portrayal of him so effective is her willingness to acknowledge sympathetically his admirable personal qualities. Principled, sincere, and generous, he intercedes with the government so that Rosa can receive a passport and thus journey abroad. Brandt, moreover, is well traveled, well educated, and possessed of sophisticated cultural tastes; Kandinskys, O'Keefes, and Picassos grace his home. Yet none of this inhibits him from passionately championing the merits of apartheid. Indeed, his probity and intelligence make his advocacy all the more influential. For those who naively believe that education or better communication between cultures or an appeal to conscience can somehow substitute for power in the struggle against apartheid, Gordimer's Brandt is a sobering antidote.

Those pictured in the harshest light in *Burger's Daughter* are the sentimental liberals who object to the "excesses" of apartheid but recoil from repudiating it root and branch. There is, for instance, the woman who proposes to improve "understanding between the races" by launching a "Courtesy Year" with the slogan "Smile and Say Thanks." But radicals too are dissected under the glare of Gordimer's critical attention. She clearly admires the willingness of white Communists to forgo security and to assume the burden of fighting a repressive regime. But she shows how even in rebelling, the Communists allow a mindless conformity to grip their own ranks. Unflinching in their fight against apartheid, they are also unyielding in their defense of atrocities committed in the name of communism. With tragic and ironic consequences, the Soviet Union remains their icon despite its interventions in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. As Rosa recalls, "when the Russians moved into Prague . . . the faithful were still promising the black liberation through Communism, as they had always done."

Because Gordimer is mainly concerned with the effect of apartheid upon whites, she develops few black characters. And those she does create serve mainly to highlight aspects of her white characters' personalities that only emerge in interracial encounters. There is, of course, nothing wrong with this; Gordimer rightly portrays what she knows best. What is wrong, however, is the response of critics like Anthony

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measure, to redeem the promise of her subject. She avoids the crude didacticism that often mars fiction centrally concerned with politics. But in evading that temptation, she writes in an oblique, self-consciously mannered style that robs her story of much of its power. Whereas others have allowed ideology to choke their novels, she allows effete refinement to dominate hers. This helps to explain why Rosa remains a peculiarly unmemorable character, a heroine deserving of a far more ample delineation of thought and motivation than that supplied by her creator. Rosa's reasons, for instance, for suddenly abandoning her lover and the comforts of life abroad to embrace again the risks of protest at home are left almost wholly undeveloped.

Throughout *Burger's Daughter*, Gordimer displays more the photographic eye of the short story writer than the cinematic imagination of the novelist. Her plot proceeds not with a flow of events but with an accretion of images. Nonetheless, her literary snapshots often provide glimpses into her society.

AFTER DICKINSON

Flowers from the World—
Last longer—than the Hothouse kind—
And the Love we learn—from Worms
Is surer than—Divine.

But who can turn away from Man—or Woman—
who testifies—This I have seen—
And spoken with the Living God—
Though doubtful as December's hired Rose—

Joyce Peseroff

Sampson, who complimented Gordimer in the *New York Times Book Review* by writing that "no one has better described the vigor and humor, as well as the misery of Soweto." Why is there such a widespread and restless impulse to praise non-black commentators on black African life while the writings of black Africans languish for want of attention? Gordimer may be without peer when it comes to writing creatively about the inner world of white South Africans. But for the imaginative recreation of life within the black townships one must turn to the black writers who have first-hand experience of this life, veteran craftsmen such as Ezekiel Mphahlele and Alex La Guma, or, even better, to the young black artists who contribute to the excellent South African monthly, *Staffrider*.

Gordimer herself has been in the forefront of those who insist upon an equal appreciation for black views, deeds, and sacrifices. The most poignant scene in *Burger's Daughter* focuses upon the exaggerated attention white South African dissidents receive in the West compared to the cruel silence that often greets the heroism of black rebels. Lionel Burger is memorialized on television and in the papers, observes Bassie, a black revolutionary living in London. Yet no one seems to recall that Bassie's father, too, had died in prison for fighting apartheid. As Bassie resentfully admits, "even I don't remember much about him."

Finally, it is important to note that *Burger's Daughter* is banned in South Africa. Not that this is anything new for Gordimer; two of her previous novels were also banned, a peculiar tribute to her integrity. Inhibited neither by government censorship nor by unproductive guilt over her status as a well-off white, she asserts her humanity in the best way she can: by writing honestly about problems with which she

herself has wrestled. *Burger's Daughter*, though flawed, is a monument to her artistic courage, a beacon from a land shrouded in fear. "It's strange," says Rosa, "to live in a country where there are still heroes." Nadine Gordimer is one of them.

Randall Kennedy

Randall Kennedy is a student at Yale Law School.

Brief Reviews

Hubert: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Humphrey I Knew
by Edgar Berman, M.D.

(Putnam's; \$10.95)

In the course of his several failures to gain the presidency there must have been a moment when Hubert Humphrey cursed the irony of his political fate. Yet memory recalls this decent and thoughtful man consistently consoling his crestfallen supporters while expressing support for his opponent in the interest of national unity. "The politics of joy" was less a slogan than a philosophical affirmation by the senator, whose passion for his nation was never tempered by personal defeats.

Dr. Berman, Humphrey's personal physician, ruefully suggests that these qualities of decency, thoughtfulness, and ebullience which animated Humphrey's life may have led to his political setbacks. Ultimate power accrues to the person whose singleminded

pursuit of it allows no sentimental diversions. Murray Kempton observed that HHH "had an overabundance of feeling for humanity." And though this endeared him to many, the price he had to pay for his compassion was considerable. The senator's staff was a case in point. The people he assembled about him were sufficient for the sprint of a Minnesota campaign but woefully inadequate for the sustained distance of a national race. Yet he would not jettison them, for loyalty was one of his highest priorities. He valued it so much that, though he opposed Lyndon Johnson's policy of escalation in Vietnam and wrote a detailed memo to that effect in 1965, his role as vice president would allow no hint of disloyalty to the president by the voicing of that dissent beyond the confines of family and close friends.

Even as the 1968 campaign flagged under the crossfire of the antiwar coalition that decimated his candidacy, Humphrey stubbornly sought to avoid an open break with LBJ's policy lest the peace negotiations be endangered. That he forfeited the election in so doing says a great deal more about this man than cynical journalists were willing to concede. For they were more likely to accept the brutal analysis of Johnson who sneered that his vice president "was all heart and no balls," or the wisdom of that devotee of the jugular who smirked: "The trouble with Humphrey is that, unlike most men of power, he didn't have enough hatred in him to enjoy revenge."

He was indeed above revenge or, for that matter, holding grudges. This much the many who deserted him in 1968—and then sought and received his aid once he returned to the Senate—discovered to their puzzled delight. To

Corrections

Due to an editing error, Joyce Carol Oates's review (TNR, September 15) stated that *Transparent Things* by Vladimir Nabokov is a collection of short stories. Ms. Oates knows that it is a novel, even if her editors do not.

Several words were inadvertently deleted from Robert D. Kaplan's letter, "Union-busting" (TNR, September 15), which reversed its meaning. The last sentence should have read: "Thus, the fact that today unions are losing more than one-half of NLRB elections generally must be attributed to the rational decisions of workers rather than any fear or other emotions purportedly generated by psychological warfare used by employers."

the end Hubert Humphrey remained a consummate gentleman of principle. As such he was a mutant in a political species that thrives upon expediency.

Thus is the author's remembrance of a valued friend and grudging patient. As memoirs go this is superior to most, claiming neither exaggerated personal influence nor shared power. Rather, Dr. Berman offers a moving tribute to a man whose stature continues to increase in contrast to the diminished visages of his more pragmatic contemporaries.

Alan L. Miller

Alan L. Miller is a freelance writer who has reviewed for *National Review* and *Saturday Review*.

Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration by Norman Cousins

(Norton; \$9.95)

In 1964, after a strenuous working trip to the Soviet Union, Norman Cousins fell ill. He was informed that he was suffering from *collagen*—a severe disease of the connective tissue from which, a group of specialists told him, he was unlikely to recover. His spontaneous reaction was resistance to the negative prognosis by combining his own strong "will to live" with a sophisticated martialing of his extraordinary medical and philosophical resources.

Cousins's instinct and his belief in the life force ("*vix medicatrix naturae*") led him not only to reject the experts' pronouncement, but to remove himself from the hospital and to cease taking toxic medication. Inspired by reading works by Hans Selye and others, he concluded that if negative emotions caused negative chemical reactions in the body, then the release and expression of positive emotions might trigger the opposite. Thus, he followed a self-imposed program to make himself laugh—by reading humorous works and watching old Marx Brothers movies. Admitting that there was nothing whatsoever scientific about this approach, he is firm about the result. It worked. "I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly

laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep." Cousins accompanied his prescription of laughter with doses of Vitamin C. Slowly he recovered the use of his limbs and was able to resume the many activities he enjoyed—horseback riding, playing tennis, practicing the piano, and his professional life as editor of the *Saturday Review*.

The first chapter of this book, originally published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, details the fascinating particulars of Cousins's illness, self-diagnosis, and recovery. Subsequent chapters deal with related issues—drugs, the strong relationship between longevity and creativity as exemplified in the lives of such men as Albert Schweitzer and Pablo Casals, the positive role of pain, and, finally, Cousins's growing involvement in the holistic health movement.

Cousins's story is a tribute to what may be achieved by the individual. It is not a brief for self-cure in any and all circumstances, as he is quick to point out. And it must be said that not every patient will possess Cousins's unusual curiosity and knowledge about medicine. Still, his example of gumption and faith will offer hope to many.

Daphne Abeel

Daphne Abeel is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Correspondence, from page 7

Delbert Africa, was subsequently beaten while unarmed by at least four policemen. This information, although certainly not excusing the police's behavior in this instance, at least provides a fuller context and a more understandable motive for the beating. There are, unfortunately, many other "ghastly incidents" that could be brought forth.

John R. Shea
University of Pennsylvania

Gamey taste

To the editors:

Your "Texas Diarist" (TNR, September 1 & 8) is "mystified by the people who regard hunters as dangerous mental defectives." Actually the problem lies in

the fact that a perfectly normal human being becomes blind as a bat when out in the field with his trusty weapon.

A doe will sprout horns in a buck-only area. "No Trespassing" signs turn into targets on the local rifle range. The farmer's gates and fences look like an enemy territory surrounded by barbed wire entanglements. A cow, or, alas, another hunter, becomes a deer behind that tree.

And the hunter's poor old eyes fail to see the polite grimaces on his guests' faces as they all sit down to a game dinner and pick away at something that often tastes like a cross between spoiled mule meat and a piece of old shoe leather.

Vincent Carpenter
Billings, Montana

Visionary liberal

To the editors:

Hey, after 25 years of benign neglect, *The New Republic* finally gets around to reviewing one of my books (review of *Abbey's Road*, TNR, August 25). Thanks a lot, fellas. I'm sorry, of course, that my feeble attempts at irony, humor, self-mockery were lost on your reviewer, the

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extremely literal-minded Ms. (Miss? Mrs.?) "S.C." But she is right in charging me with "visionary liberalism"; it's true, I'm guilty, I've been a visionary liberal ever since 1937, when, as a little boy in the hills of Pennsylvania, I was rooting for John L. Lewis, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the Spanish Loyalists. I

gather from the review that that sort of thing is no longer in style. Disappointing, but not surprising; try as I might, I just never have been able to keep up with all the latest twists and turns in literary fashion.

Edward Abbey
Oracle, Arizona

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My ad reads:



THE NEW REPUBLIC MAGAZINE

Stuart Eizenstat, the White House substance man, says on "Face the Nation" that the country doesn't need a tax cut right now, but may need one next year. He adds, "It is important, if we are required to act—and there is no reason to believe at this point we do—that it be action which helps with the recession and unemployment, and at the same time helps with inflation. It ought to be both anti-inflationary and anti-recessionary." Does the Carter administration really know of a way to cut taxes that also will help cure both inflation and recession? If so, it is a remarkable display of complaisance to insist that we needn't bother about it for the moment. I was hoping one of the assembled pundits might ask Eizenstat the formula for this fiscal elixir of youth, and why his administration wishes to keep it bottled up, but no such luck. Now, if Eizenstat is run over by a truck, the secret will die with him. If he survives until primary season next spring, and the administration at that point proposes a tax cut that will end the recession, reduce inflation, cure arthritis, and make the desert bloom, I hope someone will have the presence of mind to ask why this wonder cure was suppressed for so long.

Just when I'd given up hope, the May/June issue of the *National Notary*, my second favorite magazine, arrived in the mail last week. But this special "Year-book '79" issue was well worth waiting for, if only because of the seven pages of fine reproductions of notarial seals from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. "Have Stamp, Will Travel," a stimulating profile of a woman who runs a 24-hour traveling notary service describes how she "ranges all over the far-flung greater Los Angeles area to perform notarizations." Half her commissions take her to hospitals and rest homes. "'I'm very strict and extra careful—especially in rest homes,' she said, recalling numerous instances when offspring would mislead hospitalized parents about documents. . . . 'You've got to be on your toes to be a Notary.'" A high point of the issue, I think, is a *Playboy*-type interview with Milton G. Valera in his role as executive director of the National Notary Association, though the novelty of this feature is reduced somewhat by the fact that Mr. Valera is also editor of the *National Notary* magazine, author of one article, and quoted extensively in half a dozen others. My copy came with a cover letter from Mr. Valera as well. The issue is

lavishly illustrated with, among others, four pictures of Mr. Valera and one of "colorful Mekee dancers . . . in primitive Papua New Guinea," to which a notarial field trip is being planned.

Twice in recent months, someone putting together a symposium of editors has called these offices requesting *The New Republic's* answer to the question: "Would you publish an article describing how to make a hydrogen bomb?" Our answer in both cases was a resounding "No—it sounds much too boring." If this had been the Justice Department's grounds for trying to suppress the *Progressive* magazine's article on this subject—an effort the government abandoned last week when the same tedious information was published elsewhere—I might have been more sympathetic. Instead, as Nathan Lewin pointed out in these pages ("How a Legal Bomb Works," *TNR*, March 24), the only effect of the government's action was to certify the importance and accuracy of what otherwise would have been treated as a lot of incomprehensible rubbish. When this controversy first arose six months ago, the urgently posed question was whether we should let Idi Amin get the recipe for the H-bomb. Since that time Amin has moved without leaving a forwarding address, so his copy of the October *Progressive* is likely to go undelivered even if his subscription hasn't expired by now, making the whole question moot anyway.

Still, I'm a bit troubled. This information was worthless—not even classified—and the government was trigger-happy in trying to suppress it, but what if it was otherwise? The press seems to regard the problem of security secrets as a kind of game. The government is supposed to guard its secrets, but if it fumbles one, the press is entitled to grab it and run. But why should this be? It seems to me the government ought to be able to try to catch its mistake before really damaging publicity takes place. This brings us to that press anathema, "prior restraint." The *Washington Post*, which bows to no one in its hatred of prior restraint, last week praised the demise of restraints against the *Progressive* and then urged the Justice Department to prosecute those who have published dangerous atomic secrets and send them away for 20 years if necessary. Now what is worse: a brief delay in publication, or 20 years in jail?

Right now the government must run its security apparatus on the assumption that anything that leaks out is gone forever; journalists must either always honor government classifications or risk going to jail, because there's no way to challenge them beforehand; and judges are forced to make an impossible split-second decision between unleashing the nuclear holocaust and trampling on the First Amendment. Why not a bit of prior restraint if information is classified or otherwise plausibly dangerous to national security? The real protection against censorship should be a strict time limit (a week, say) and a very high burden of proof on the government that publication would do serious and irreparable harm to national security. In the *Progressive* case, the courts let the government piddle around for half a year, possibly because of the attitude of the press that all was lost once publication had been held up for 30 seconds. Under a more sensible arrangement, Idi Amin would have had his *Progressive* in time to read it on the bus to Libya.

When no one was looking, the Senate guaranteed the future of private fortunes by sneaking the biggest loophole in the tax code onto President Carter's windfall profits tax bill. When you sell inherited property, you pay a capital gains tax on any increase in value since you inherited it. Any increase that took place before your benefactor died goes untaxed. This was simply an oversight when the income tax started, but it has grown into an enormous boon to the rich. With skillful portfolio management, large fortunes passed from one generation to the next can escape income tax almost completely. In fact, the government loses more money from this loophole than it brings in from all the capital gains that are taxed—about \$20 billion a year—all, of course, from those wealthy enough to have significant inherited property. This loophole was closed as part of what we can see in retrospect was Congress's last gasp of liberalism, the Tax Reform Act of 1976. Senators, especially, almost immediately began to regret this rash action, as the potential effect on their friends began to sink in. Last year Congress "delayed" the effect of the new rule until 1980, and now the *Wall Street Journal* reports that repeal is inevitable. This tax cut won't do much for either inflation or unemployment, but it will help those who count.

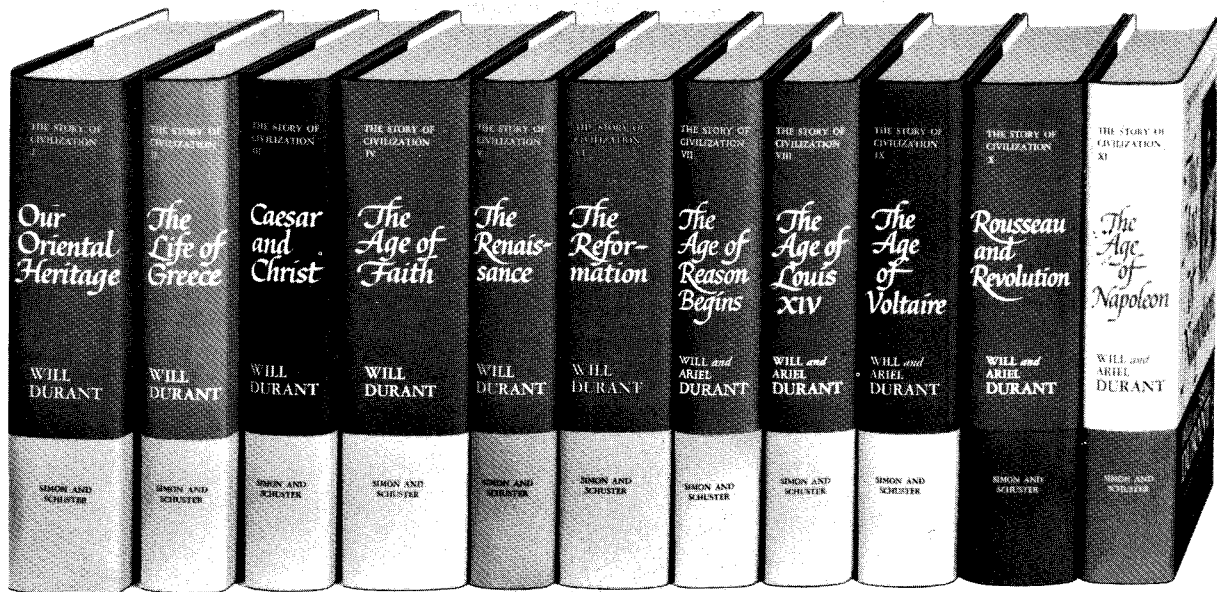
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